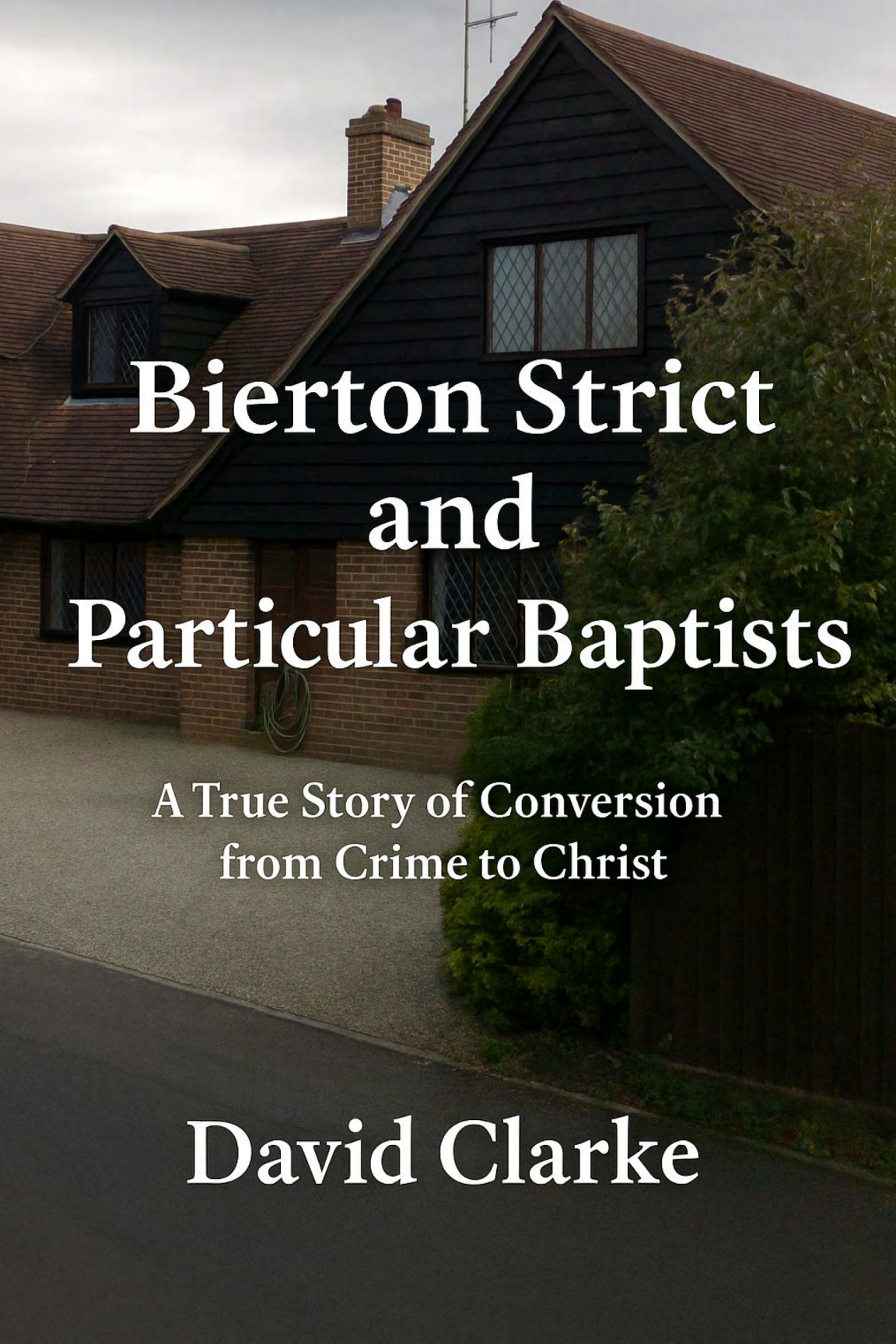

Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists

A True Story of Conversion from Crime to Christ

David Clarke

BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS

David Clarke

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Dedication

"To Christ, the Eternal Wisdom of God,
who was with the Father before the foundation of the world,
by whom all things were made,
and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

(Proverbs 8:22–30; John 1:1–3; Colossians 2:3, KJV)

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

The Man Possessed With Devils

In the New Testament, there are three separate accounts of a man possessed with devils. He dwelt among the tombs, and though men had often sought to bind him with chains and fetters, he brake the bands asunder, and was not restrained. The people were afraid of him and avoided him. He had no house, wore no clothes, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.

At this time, Jesus had just demonstrated His authority over the wind and the sea to His disciples. Thereafter, He commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man and permitted the legion of devils to enter into a herd of swine. As a result, the man was found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind.

The man desired to be with Jesus and accompany Him, but Jesus refused, instructing him instead:

"Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee." (Luke 8:39, KJV)

And immediately he went his way and published throughout the whole city all that Jesus had done for him.

THE AUTHOR'S TESTIMONY

This book is a record of the personal testimony of the author, setting forth what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for him. It was first published on 11th February 2001 under the title *Converted on LSD Trip*.

It is not written to glorify the author's past sinful life, but rather as a testimony to the Lord's mercy and saving grace — despite a background of crime and rebellion.

In these pages, the author recounts his early life before his sudden conversion from crime to Christ; his learning of the doctrines of the grace of God; and his joining the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists Church in 1976. He also narrates his secession from the church over matters of conscience in 1984. These matters are more fully addressed in his book, *The Bierton Crisis 1984*, now republished as, *Let Christian Men Be Men*.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

Even the Apostle Paul spoke of his past life in his own defence when persecuted by the Jews. He declared himself to be:

"An Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;
Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." (Philippians 3:5–6, KJV)

Yet he counted all such things but loss for Christ. Although he had been a religious man, he confessed to persecuting the church unto strange cities, punishing believers "oft in every synagogue," compelling them to blaspheme, and being "exceedingly mad against them."

When Paul was arrested by the Lord on the road to Damascus, he fell to the ground, and Jesus instructed him:

"I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." (Acts 26:16, KJV)

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

In like manner, the author has written this book to inform the reader of all that the Lord Jesus Christ has done for him, and to set forth those vital truths of the gospel of Christ.

This story was first publicised under the title *Converted on LSD Trip,* which appeared as the front-page headline of the Bucks Herald newspaper in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, on 11th February 1971 — and now, thirty years later, is written anew on 11th February 2001. (See page 15.)

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Please excuse any typographical errors or faults in grammar and spelling. The author was virtually illiterate until the age of twenty-one, after which he taught himself to read and to educate himself.

Kindly take the time to understand what is herein communicated, for it is not easy to find proof-readers who will labour for love.

It is believed that the writers of the New Testament, some of which were 'unlearned and ignorant men,' faced similar challenges.

FOREWARDS

A Malcolm Kirkham

I first met David Clarke around 1965 in Aylesbury, a town just north of London. David went to the local secondary modern Grange school and I went to the Grammar School. Our worlds collided though when through mutual acquaintance I found the R & B band he played for "Fowler Mean". I joined as the singer. We became firm friends, the other band members were very straight and po faced but Dave and I connected I was aware of his older brother mike he was notorious in Aylesbury and no one messed with him. He was also an entrepreneur and extremely intelligent. On a different path Mike could have succeeded in any field.

Dave and I had many adventures during our times together. He was naturally inclined to steal however and his brazen nature astounded me. If he saw something he wanted he just took it. This is something he shared with his brother. Dave and I drifted apart when he was incarcerated along with is brother in one place and I in another for separate crimes. After 50 odd years we are in touch again. This book get details the life and times of a criminal, his redemption and his present day mission. It is also a snap shot of a period time and a place. End Of.

Malcolm Kirkham 06 May 2017

B Dr Philip Fleming

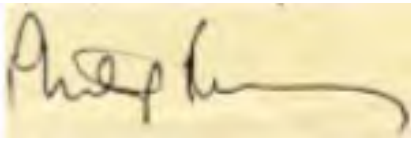
MA. BA, Bch. FRCPsych. DPM

"Converted on LSD Trip"

This book, the personal testament of David Clarke, in an autobiographical style. It charts his life, which became one of criminality and drug taking though an experience in 1970 of finding God whilst under the influence of LSD. Cynics may say that this was just an effect of drugs, but it is clear that the experience changed his life. Later when in court facing charges he admitted to many other crimes and was fortunate in receiving three years conditional discharge and not a prison sentence.

Since then David has combined his work as a lecturer in electronics with his mission of spreading the word of God. This is a scrupulously honest book recording both the difficulties he has faced as well as the successes in his life since 1970. A continuing worry is the fat of his brother, currently serving a long prison sentence in a Philippine jail who himself has recently found God.

"This is an inspiring story of a life that has been turned from crime to a positive account and may be of help to others who find them selves directionless and involved in crime and drug misuse".



Dr. Philip M. Fleming. MA. BA, Bch. FRCPsych. DPM.

Consultant Psychiatrist with special responsibility for drug and alcohol misuse.

C Gregg Haslam
Rev. Gregg Haslam Senior Minister Westminster Chapel, London

Gregg Haslam

"David Clarke tells the story of his troubled violent past and his extraordinary life, in such a way that it re-tells the story of Jesus' love that's available for us all. Christ has the power to renew and reclaim anyone's wasted years, no matter we've done, or how deep our shame. He can re-launch our lives on a brand new future that we could never have planned for ourselves."

Westminster Chapel

London SW1E 6BS

D Samuel Ntoyimondo
Chaplain HMPS Nottingham

" This moving story demonstrates the goodness and mercy of God and it is a clear proof that no one is beyond God's grace, mercy and love. Whatever wrongdoings we do, God continues to call us back to Him and if we accept, He fulfills His plan for us to give us hope for the future. "

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Early Life

David Clarke was born in Oldham, Lancashire, in 1949. During the 1960s, he and his older brother, Michael, descended into lives of crime, promiscuity, and infamy during their teenage years while living in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. They lived with their parents and younger sister and became involved in criminal activities.

In 1967, both brothers were sentenced to prison: David to a young persons' Borstal Training Institute at Dover, and Michael to Maidstone Prison.

Upon leaving Dover Borstal in 1968, David resolved to live a life of crime without fear of God, respect for society, or regard for family. Over the next three years, he pursued a career of undetected crime until a Christian woman confronted him with the truth of his sinful lifestyle.

Conversion To Christ

David initially believed Christianity was for those unable to enjoy life or stand on their own two feet. However, on 16th January 1970, whilst under the influence of LSD and experiencing a horrifying "bad trip," David cried out to God for help. He was arrested — not by the police, but by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who revealed to him that the horrors he experienced were but a foretaste of hell.

That night, David turned away from his sinful life of crime and immorality to follow Christ.

He began reading the Bible immediately, alongside other Christian books, and attended a variety of churches. Soon after, he confessed to the police twenty-four crimes he had committed between his release from Borstal in 1968 and his conversion in 1970.

Ministry And Service

In 1974, David joined the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church. He trained as a lecturer, later teaching electronics at Luton College of Higher Education, serving in Higher and Further Education until 2001.

The Bierton Church, founded in 1831, became a Gospel Standard cause in 1981. In 1982, David was called and sent by the church to preach the gospel wherever the Lord opened the door.

Seeking to reach his old friends, David organised a preaching meeting at Bierton Chapel in 1983. Providentially, this meeting was recorded and is available today on YouTube under the title:

"David Preaching at Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist, 5th June 1983".

Following this meeting, David experienced significant opposition, leading to his secession from the church in 1984. His account of these events is recorded in his work, *The Bierton Crisis* now republished as *Let Christian Men Be Men.*

The Defence And Confirmation Of The Gospel

This book stands as David's confession and testimony, written "for the defence and confirmation of the gospel" (Philippians 1:7, 12).

Believing that the events of his life have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel, David has sought to promote the truths of Christ further by establishing the Bierton Particular Baptist Open College, an Internet-based theological school, and also forming the Bierton Particular Baptist College in Pakistan.

Those wishing to be trained in the doctrines of grace may enrol and receive the necessary assistance for their theological education.

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CHAPTER 1
Confession to 24 Crimes (The Court Case)

It was real, absolutely real, but none of my friends really believed me. All I could do was tell them what had happened to me, and that was what I did. I told them all—the long, the short, and the tall. As many of them as I could. They thought I had gone mad after taking LSD.

Jesus Christ had spoken to me and rescued me from a bad LSD trip on Friday evening, 16th January 1970. He had said that what I had been going through was nothing compared to what hell was like. I now knew the way and was determined to tell the others. I had become a Christian and no longer needed to live the lifestyle I had adopted, which had involved crime, drugs, promiscuity, flash cars, and fame. I had been born again.

I was now responsible for sorting out all my stolen gear. What could be done with a builder's shed and stolen cars? I still had in my possession many stolen goods, which included the 48-foot by 24-foot builder's shed, stolen one night from a building site at Berkhampstead, and a lovely "G" reg. Mini, stolen from Hemel Hempstead, which was in the process of being "rung." Ringing meant replacing an old mini with legitimate registration documents and number plates with a new one. My new mini was being used to replace it. This was to be my new car. I also had a Morris Minor Traveller, which had been rung and was being used as a hire car. I had stolen garage equipment: an air compressor, electric welding equipment, spray guns, a trolley jack, and several pieces of electrical test equipment, including oscilloscopes, AVO meters, and colour TVs. I had all the garage equipment I needed to repair and spray cars.

I had a lovely Citroën DS car in the builder's shed, which was being repaired. I obtained this car through swapping it for a colour TV set—stolen from an old people's home called Redfields in Winslow, Buckinghamshire. I also had two nice speedboat engines, getting ready for the summer of 1970. All in all, I had had a real good time full of excitement and fun.

In fact, I had been stopped in the midst of my career, which involved stealing all kinds of goods to have a good time. I had intended to have a caravan, a speedboat, water skis, aqualung diving gear, flash cars, motorbikes, clothes and so on—all through stealing. I was in fact stopped whilst in the midst of my career—but not by the police. It was Jesus Christ who had called

me by name, and I followed Him.

What To Do With Stolen Goods After One Becomes a Christian

I thank God He intervened again a year later and His hand was clearly seen once more. I had no one else to help. As I write this, I take encouragement in the faithfulness of God to me in never leaving me or forsaking me. I realise now I was kept through the power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to bear witness today, to many people, of the goodness and mercy of God.

The Problem Was Solved by a Visit from the C.I.D.

I was sitting at the table in our kitchen at 37 Finmere Crescent one evening in late 1971, when a knock came on the door. I had two visitors—a Detective Constable Robson and a younger man. I was greeted quite politely but with sure and certain words: "You are charged with stealing a colour television set," and, "Would you accompany us down to the police station to make a statement?"

I knew instantly what I must do and say. I saw the hand of God and believed this was all His doing, but I did not know the outcome. Leaving the outcome to God, I asked the two men to sit down in the kitchen and I admitted the charge. DC Robson seemed most relieved. He told me later that he had thought I would be very difficult and deny the charge.

I explained I would certainly come with them to the police station and make a statement, but I wanted to speak to them about other things first. I said I had many crimes I wished to tell them about but wanted to first explain why I was informing them.

I wanted it to be known that they would not have been able to find out about my crimes unless I confessed to them. I wanted to testify to the saving work of Jesus Christ—that He had saved me from my former criminal way of life a year previously and that I did not wish to get off lightly with this confession but rather bear testimony for Christ. My crimes could not be discovered unless I admitted them. I had a lot of property, which could be returned.

I went with them to the police station and spent the rest of the evening making written statements giving details of my crimes. I was detained that evening in the police cells at Walton Street Police Station in Aylesbury. My shoelaces were removed, but I was allowed my New Testament (Authorised

Version, Working Man's Pocket Edition).

I had to appear in Aylesbury Magistrates' Court on 9th February 1971 and answered two charges of burglary and one of theft. I also asked for 21 other crimes of theft to be taken into consideration—all of which had been committed since I left Borstal, between September 1967 and 16th January 1970. I decided I did not need legal representation, as I would speak for myself.

With my past record of probation and Borstal training, it was quite expected that I would be sent to prison. I was okay with this because I deserved it, and I believed God was in this and had a definite purpose in it. I set my affairs in order at home and gave directions that my Mini Traveller, which I had rebuilt, was to be given to Barry Crown, if I got sent down. I believed the outcome was of God and that it would have a good reason.

Testimony of Barry Crown
R. B. Crown, 45 Mitcham Walk, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire
6th February 1971
To the Clerk to the Magistrates,
I am a graduate of Salford University and hold a B.Sc. in Civil Engineering. I am currently employed by Aylesbury Borough Council, working under Mr. Hanney, the Borough Engineer and Surveyor, since September 1970.

Shortly after taking up residence in Aylesbury, I befriended Mr. David Clarke, whom I met at the Full Gospel Church, Rickfords Hill. I found David to be a true and sincere Christian seeking to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to give personal testimony of the salvation through Jesus Christ, which he himself had experienced.

David told me how he had been miraculously converted on January 16th 1970 and about the subsequent change in his whole manner and outlook on life. Before his conversion, he confessed to a life of drugs and theft, but now he no longer had any desire or pleasure in such things, since Christ destroyed the power of such in his life.

For the six months I have known David, I have been a witness to the truth of his testimony and know him as a completely honest and trustworthy follower of the Christian faith.

Yours sincerely, R. B. Crown

Testimony of Cyril Bryan
176 Cambridge Street, Aylesbury2nd February 1971

To the Clerk to the Magistrates,

Dear Sir,

I am privileged to write a testimony concerning David Clarke, and I count it a privilege because it is to the glory of God.

I have known this young man through conversations and meetings at the Full Gospel Testimony Church at Rickfords Hill, Aylesbury. The change of character and speech in him is miraculous, as are all the works of God. As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ for 30 years, I know that David Clarke is a transformed person by the grace of God.

You will know his past life; I testify to his new life in Christ Jesus.
Yours sincerely,
C. Bryan

Testimony of Mr. E. H. Connet
125 Park Street, Aylesbury2nd February 1971

To Whom It May Concern,

This is to certify that I have known Mr. Clarke for approximately 9 months since his conversion to Christianity. I am fully persuaded that he has turned his back on his past life and changed for the better. He is now earnestly endeavouring to make amends for his past mistakes and even influence others to turn their lives over to God, as he has done.

Yours faithfully,E. H. Connet

I Speak in Court

I appeared in court on the 9th February 1971, dressed in my dark blue (Mod) suit. I pleaded guilty and then a report from the police was read. I was given leave to speak for myself. I spoke extempore—without notes—trusting in the Lord for the help I needed. I described my pre-conversion

days, my conversion, and my life since becoming a Christian, explaining my difficulties regarding the stolen goods I still possessed.

I was able to speak of what Jesus had done for me in a way that only God could have worked. After this, Peter Murray spoke on my behalf, confirming my testimony.

This happened on Tuesday, 9th February 1971—a date that proved significant to me three years later. I was amazed, as were all my Christian friends. The magistrates thought I was trying to be a martyr. They obviously believed I should be sent to prison but, as part of my punishment, were not going to give me what they thought I wanted. God smiled. We smiled with Him. It was good to be a child of God.

The Bucks Herald Weekly Paper

The whole court appearance was reported in the local and national newspapers, including the Evening Standard. The headlines of the Bucks Herald read: "Why he confessed to 24 crimes" and "Converted on LSD trip," whiNle the Bucks AdvNews Paper Reportertiser read: "Man speaks of horrors on LSD."

News Paper Report Februaary 1971

The Bucks Herald

Second Edition

CONVERTED ON LSD TRIP

David Clarke who had a three-year career of undetected crime, experienced a "Christian conversion" whilst suffering from the effects of LSD, he told Aylesbury magistrates, on Tuesday. After wrestling with his conscience for a year, he confessed to 24 crimes and gave information leading to the recovery of over £1000 worth of stolen property. In court

Seeking Truth

Voice Of Christ

Difficulty

Continued inside

David Could these boys do any real wrong. T Michael

Bucks Herald Script (11th February 1971)

David Clarke, who had a three-year career of undetected crime, experienced a "Christian conversion" whilst suffering from the effects of LSD, he told Aylesbury magistrates on Tuesday. After wrestling with his conscience for a year, he confessed to 24 crimes and gave information leading to the recovery of over £1,000 worth of stolen property.

In court, he pleaded guilty to charges of stealing a £300 colour television set from an old people's home, a £20 spray gun, and a hydraulic jack. He asked for 21 other charges to be taken into consideration, including stealing a builder's shed, two cars, an electric arc welder, two other TV sets, two compressors, and a road trailer. Clarke (21), of Finmere Crescent, said that his reputation in the town had been that of a man who was enjoying himself.

"I used to sell drugs to young people, and indulge in permissive sex," he declared. "Religion to me was rubbish, and for sissy people who could not stand on their own feet," he said. "Within my heart I was searching for truth, and a meaning to life."

He had good prospects in life, but "was not satisfied with what I had—I was greedy, selfish, and boastful." Clarke had been using pep pills and marijuana since age 16, but it was after taking LSD that he experienced what he described as "a major thing in my life." He described the torment he suffered as a result of the drug, and warned young people: "The effects of LSD are so bad, and I warn you to stay clear."

"*While in this condition, I called on the name of Jesus, and the torment went from me*."

Jesus Christ spoke to me as clearly as I speak here today, saying, 'David, I am with you.'

Mr. Murray of Manor Crescent, Wendover, said he was habitually sceptical of sudden conversions and preferred to test them over time. The time elapsed since Clarke's profession of faith had convinced him that this young man was now salt and light to society. "He is, in truth, a new man, and has experienced what Christ called a second birth."

Clarke now put himself out to be of assistance, read the Bible intensely, always carried a New Testament, attended a wide circle of churches, and would spend hours in discussion on spiritual matters.

Clarke's difficulty during the months spent deciding how to make amends had been the problem of accusing himself without informing on others.

Passing sentence, the chairman of the magistrates, Colonel I. Tetley, told Clarke: "You have pleaded guilty to three offences and asked us to take into consideration 21 others. Except for a record over a short period of time—

which is quite the worst we have ever seen—we have considered what we ought to do and have come to the conclusion that your evident desire to become a martyr is one we are not going to gratify."

He gave Clarke a conditional discharge for three years, pointing out that the sincerity of his conversion could be shown by his behaviour during that period.

The outcome of the court case was a complete surprise to us all, and we were overjoyed. A Christian friend, Mrs. Chapski of Broughton Avenue, Aylesbury, invited us all back to her home for coffee.

DC Robson informed me that they had discovered I was the person who had stolen the television from Mike West. An enemy of Mike West had tipped them off. Mike West appeared in court on the same day and was fined £25. He nearly lost his job with the insurance company he worked for. His court appearance was reported alongside mine in the newspaper.

After this, I gave Mike West his Citroën car back, which I had swapped for the colour TV. I had re-sprayed it bright banana yellow and replaced the engine. At least he was able to sell it and get some money back. I now know and take encouragement that God works well and sorts things out when we cannot.

As far as the other stolen goods were concerned, the police managed to take away most of them. The firm who owned the builder's shed sent a trailer, but no one would help load it. In the end, Mrs. Knight was the only one to help. It was hard work, but we managed to load it late one night. To give some idea of the value of the stolen items: the shed was worth £400, the mini was brand new and worth £672, and the price of a terraced house at that time was £2,000.

I Tell My Story

I wish to tell my story starting from my natural birth and lead the reader up to my conversion when the Lord Jesus spoke to me (my second birth). I then wish to speak about being a Christian and seeking to follow the Lord while meeting the many and varied Christian groups and people.

I wish to share how I learned the distinctive truths of the doctrines of grace and the sovereignty of God, which led me to join the Bierton Strict

and Particular Baptist Church. I will also relate my call to preach and list the churches where I shared the Gospel.

Sadly, I later seceded from the Bierton Church due to doctrinal departures. The church allowed general redemption to be taught and fell into the error of using the Law of Moses as their rule of life and conduct, rather than the Gospel. My secession is recorded in my publication, *The Bierton Crisis*, where I name prevalent errors and present the Scriptural views which I nw republished as ***Let Chrisitan Men Be Men***, for all who will hear..

It is my desire that this will help and edify fellow Christians and seekers of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 2

My Early Life

I was born on the 16th February 1949 at 9:50 AM, in Boundary Park General Hospital, Oldham, Lancashire. My mother's name was Elsie Dyson Clarke who married my father, Thomas George Clarke, sometime after the war. She informed me that this hospital was next to Oldham Athletic football ground.

We lived with my mother's father at 26 Fleet Street, Clarksfield, Oldham. My granddad's name was Watts Ormrod, a retired craftsman and senior member of a Trades Union.

Boundary Park Hospital

This Is Where I Was Born

His hair was white, which I am told happened due to an accident at work when a large rivet was pushed through his hand. I had a brother, Michael John, who was two and a half years older than me. His name was spelled incorrectly at the registrar's office because of my mother's stubborn

insistence. The registrar told her the spelling was wrong, but she insisted it would stay as she wrote it.

The Clarke Family

Michael David Granddad Ormrod Dad Mum

My Parents

Thomas George Clarke Elsie Dyson Clarke

Thomas George Clarke and Elsie Dyson Clarke were both in the armed forces—dad in the Army and mum in the Royal Air Force. They were very proud to be British.

I was christened at Christ's Church, Glodwick. My godfather was David Maltby of 382 Barton Road, Stratford, and was a sidesman at the church on Barton Road. He gave me a Bible inscribed with Proverbs 3:6:

*"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."— Proverbs 3:6 (*KJV)

I later found a baptism certificate dated 3rd April 1949 stating that I became a "member of Christ the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." This, however, I now understand to be incorrect—I did not become a member of Christ until I was born again on 16th January 1970.

I remember attending the church and Sunday school at Christ Church, just down the road from Fleet Street. Once, I was so comfortable on the pew I fell asleep and woke up with a jolt just as the vicar was finishing. I must have been around 3 or 4 years old. It was my mother's idea to take my brother and me to Sunday school.

My Baptismal Certificate

David's Baptismal Certificate 3rd April 1949

St. Barnabas Sunday School

At Sunday school I remember drawing houses. I questioned why the teacher always placed the door in the middle with windows on each side, whereas our door was to one side—like the other terrace houses in our street. I had no spiritual impressions of the Lord Jesus Christ from these experiences.

Barnabas Sunday School

St. Barnabas Sunday School Building

Across the street from our house stood a grand Roman Catholic Church surrounded by a high red-brick wall. It had stained glass windows and an aura of austerity. I often wondered what was hidden behind the wall—it gave me the same eerie feeling as reading Toby Twirl, in which a giant lived behind a great walled castle. I would never dare climb that wall.

Only years later did I learn from my mother that this was a Roman Catholic church. Until then, I assumed the Church of England was the only correct religion.

Roman Catholic Building

A formidable presence near Fleet Street

Early Memories

I remember the gas street lamps that were lit each night by a man with a long pole ladder. My favourite sweets were Kylie (what's now called sherbet), and a tiny loaf of bread called a penny loaf.

At about four years old, I once insisted on attending Sunday school at a building on Lee's Road, unaware it was Saturday. I walked two miles there by myself, found it locked, and then got lost. I ended up at a laundry shop where they placed me in the window and called the police. I was soon returned home—much to my mother's horror.

The Back Of Our House

Back Yard of 26 Fleet Street (Where I lived)

Back Alley

Back Alley at 26 Fleet Street

School Days

I started school at Clark's Field Infants' School, where my brother was already in the third year. I remember my first day well—high ceilings, sand pits, easels, and those old wooden desks.

Vivian Butler, the girl next door, cried for her mum. I didn't feel the need to cry and tried to comfort her.

Clark's Field Infants School

Clark's Field Infants School (David bottom right)

My Auntie Edith was kind to us. Every Saturday, we visited her and Auntie Alice. We went to the park, then the chip shop. Real chips, cooked in proper fat. Her potato pie with red cabbage was a treat. I loved their cellar where laundry was once done.

My Brother and the Baths

My brother and I often swam at Waterhead Baths—small pools with green water and cream tiles. Next door were slipper baths filled with hot water and carbolic soap. It was all very cosy, unlike the cold baths of today.

One Saturday, I nearly drowned. I had wandered into the deep end and couldn't touch the floor. The lifeguard, Norman, noticed just in time and saved me. I'll never forget that fear.

Opposite the baths was a slaughterhouse. My brother and I peered through the slats to see animals slaughtered—pigs squealing, blood everywhere. The

smell was awful. It seemed the pigs knew their end. I wonder now what effect this had on my brother, who later demonstrated a hardened character.

A Terrifying Fall

One evening after school, I noticed blood on my brother's book. He had fallen down a stairwell shaft at school and was concussed. That was the first time I felt how precious life was. He could have died.

Oldham, near Manchester, was once famous for its cotton mills. My grandfather was a staunch Trades Union man. As a child, I remember the huge red-brick mills, the towering chimneys, and the ominous water reservoirs we were warned to avoid. Children had drowned in them. I obeyed.

An Oldham Mill

Typical Old Mill Oldham

CHAPTER 3

Garston Infant School

We moved from Oldham to Garston, Watford when I was 5 years old and my mum took me to my first day at school, which was at Garston Infant School. I was in the second year of the infants. My mum had arranged for me to walk home with a girl called Vivian who apparently lived in Coats Way where we lived. Not that I knew my address because I didn't. All I knew was we had moved to a place called Garston, so I assumed we lived in Garston Road.

When it came to walking home I had to follow Vivian, but she took me

by a way I had never been before. A completely different way, and across a park to what was the other end of Coats Way. She left me there and I had no idea where I was, as I did not recognise anywhere at all. Feeling uneasy about all this, I realised I was lost. So I made my way back towards the school and began to ask people where Garston Road was. There was no such place but I insisted I lived in Garston Road. A man with a red Bedford Dormobile offered to take me back to school to find out where I lived, so off we went. The schoolteacher said I lived in Coats Way where Vivian had taken me, but I said I didn't live there, as I could not recognise the place. The man took me back to Coats Way but I could not identify where I lived. He drove from one end to the other. It was quite a long way with a Council estate on one end and private houses at the other end. This was where I lived—149 Coats Way. I saw my mum in the front garden—so I arrived home after being lost on my first day at school.

The German Teacher

My classroom teacher was a German woman called Miss Kitchener. She spoke with a German accent and I spoke with a broad Lancashire accent. We did not hit it off and I was hopeless at reading the flash cards. It seemed as though I was singled out and proved to be a dunce, as I could not really read. Being small I think I messed about to divert attention from my inability to do class work.

One day when I arrived at school I found a pair of pumps (they call them plimsolls now), which I later found out belonged to Vivian, on my desk. Feeling rather indignant I placed them in the dustbin. I think I might have asked the teacher, "Please Miss, whose are these pumps?" but was ignored, so in the bin they went.

The next day Vivian's mother came to school wanting to find out where her plimsolls had gone. The caretaker said he had found them and placed them on my desk. When I was questioned, I was in trouble and Miss Kitchener said my mum would have to buy a new pair as I had thrown them away. I felt this unfair and really picked on. My mum came to the school and had an argument about the pumps and the fact that a German teacher was trying to teach English. This was only a few years after the war with Germany had ended.

David and the Hamster

Shortly after the plimsolls incident, I had to stay after school until my

mum picked me up. The class had a pet hamster and this little creature got all the attention. One evening, while I waited, the teacher left the room. I took the hamster and put it inside Vivian's desk, thinking that would pay her back.

The next day, Vivian screamed, "Oh Miss! The hamster is in my desk!" It had made a mess overnight. I kept quiet as the class speculated how it escaped. No one suspected me. To this day they never found out how the hamster got there.

Congregational Sunday School

I sometimes went to Sunday school. One day I passed the Congregational church and entered. I saw some boys steal from the collection box and was puzzled why it was left unlocked. I asked the vicar. He said, "If someone feels they must steal, then they must really need it." That stayed with me.

Garston Congregational Church Building

Congregational Church Building

At Easter I listened to the crucifixion story and wondered why Jesus didn't come down from the cross. It wasn't until I was 21 that I understood He died to take away my sins.

Around 1959, my mum encouraged me to play piano. I took lessons with Miss Mary Lee and passed Grade 1 Pianoforte in July 1960. My mum's favourite music was "Side Saddle" by Russ Conway.

Cecil the Sissy and the Air Pistol

My brother and I mocked a crippled boy named Cecil. One day we launched his bike into the trees with a tree-branch catapult. My mum showed

no mercy when Cecil's mother complained. I felt bad.

David at Lea Farm Junior School

David At Lea Farm Junior School

Soon after, I brought an air pistol to school, encouraged by my brother. It was found during class, and I was caned again for bringing a weapon to school.

Wrexham Holiday and the Stolen Bike

Our family went on holiday in a rebuilt black and green Ford convertible. Mum bought it to get us from Oldham to Watford. I often fell out due to faulty doors until Dad installed a safety chain.

At the seaside, Michael lost his fishing rod—he claimed a man took it and threw it into the sea. I suspect he lost it and made up the story.

At the Garston fair, I once stole £3 from my mum for dodgems and felt terrible. I later learned that Jesus' blood cleanses all sin. Meanwhile, my brother stole goods from his paper route job.

He introduced me to stealing and flick knives, and we hid weapons under the shed floorboards. When my red Californian bike was stolen, I found it crumpled on the road. Michael Abbes, a former friend, had taken it and been hit by a car. No one cared that my bike was ruined.

A Stolen Crystal Set

My interest in electronics began when my brother stole a crystal radio set at a camping site in Chertsey. I was fascinated. I built my own radio and received help from a friend's father, who was an RAF technician.

Camping at Chertsey

Dad at Chertsey Camp-site **Dad By Our Canoe**

Later, we broke into a garden shed full of radio parts and took what we wanted. This hobby led to my career in electronics and college education.

A Visit from the Police

I once stole a valve radio from a workman's hut at a nearby gravel pit. I dismantled it and hid the chassis in my room. The police searched our house but found no evidence—I had discarded the wooden casing.

This was one of many signs of how far I had strayed. At this time, I had no knowledge or thought of God, and I had stopped going to Sunday school.

CHAPTER 4

Senior Secondary Schools

My first senior school was in Garston, as I had failed the 11 plus. It was at this school I first heard a boy play a tune called "Apache" by the Shadows, on an acoustic guitar and I was very impressed. Michael had already started at this school and did well at cricket, boxing and basketball. I was not good at any of these things but rather was interested in my radio hobby.

Michael and Boxing

I soon learned that my brother had a reputation at school as a boxer and I recall attending the school competition for sports and Michael won the boxing at that event. He would have been in the fourth year and about to leave school. On that occasion my Uncle John and Dad were there and Uncle John, after Michael's win, went and congratulated the loser to keep him encouraged. Parents were like that in those days.

Michael at Butlin's

Michael In The Horizontal Striped Jumper

The Senior Clarke Brothers

Uncle John and my Dad Tom Clarke

Michael at Butlin'sMichael in the horizontal striped jumper

My Visit to Soho

It was towards the end of my first year at Francis Coombe Secondary Modern School that I ventured to London by train with a friend of mine, Paul Dorrington. This was to visit the second-hand electrical shops to buy radio parts. I loved visiting Tottenham Court Road for this purpose, and it was on one of these visits that we stumbled across Soho and noticed the strip clubs.

These aroused our curiosity. Paul and I plucked up the courage and paid to go in and sit at a table. We could see a nude lady sitting on a chair and were given a sketchpad and pencil and encouraged to draw her picture. I felt I was growing up. Afterwards we paid one or two more visits and became wiser.

When we moved to Wilstone, a village near Tring in Hertfordshire, my radio and television hobby helped me pass the time and kept me out of too much trouble.

CHAPTER 5

Our Move to Wilstone

In 1961 we finally moved to Wilstone, a village near Tring, and Michael and I went to Tring Secondary Modern School, called Mortimer Hill. I can remember my brother wearing winklepicker shoes, and some of the girls from the next village couldn't help but say, "Oh look at those shoes." They were just different, and I suppose they felt threatened.

Michael at Tring School

Michael With His Friend Notice the Winkle Picker Shoes

Michael at Tring SchoolMichael with his friend — notice the winklepicker shoes

It was during this time that I taught myself more about radio and amplifiers. I became absorbed in this hobby. I met a man in the village called Cluck Turney, who was the man to know about televisions and radios, and he gave me a lot of help. He taught me about valve amplifiers and allowed me to build a power amplifier from all the spare parts that he had. It was a push-pull amplifier using two PX4 valves and a triode driver. I had to rewind

the driver and output transformers in order to get it working. I learned a lot from Cluck Turney.

Home Made Public Address Amplifier

Amplifier Using PX4 Valves

On one occasion I connected a microphone to my amplifier and directed the speaker out of my bedroom window. I called out as loudly as possible, "Ethel, Ethel, I am watching you!" to a neighbour in her garden. Years later I learned she thought it sounded like God speaking from the sky.

Keeping Myself Busy

To occupy myself, I made various contraptions. I built a wind-powered kart I called a land yacht, and a pair of stilts that all the kids in the village wanted.

Keeping Busy

My Land Yacht

Keeping BusyMy land yacht

I also made an electric shock machine using an ignition coil, a battery, and a mechanical vibrator. I tested it on village children by getting them to

hold hands in a circle, then shocking the entire group.

Keeping Busy

Electric Shock Machine

Keeping BusyElectric shock machine

Later I received a visit from the local policeman. I had stolen a 12-bore shotgun from an old barn and brought it home. My next-door neighbour recognised it and informed the police so it could be returned to its owner.

Stolen Shot Gun

Stolen Shot Gun From the Farm

While at Tring School, my friend Duncan Miller found a fox cub in the woods. I wanted to keep it, but when my grandma—who was staying with us—saw it, she screamed. To my dismay, Michael killed the fox, and to this day I feel he was callous.

I Ride a 350cc Triumph

The Motorbike

Michael's 350 CC Triumph Motor bike

Michael mixed with lads who had bad reputations. One friend was Bob Shearer, who lived on a farm in Tring. Michael had a 350cc Triumph motorbike with girder front forks. I rode it in a field and was quite proud of myself for managing it, having previously only ridden a moped.

Michael later got sent to detention for three months after hitting a boy with a homemade knuckle-duster. Some lads had ridden our moped without permission, and Michael used it as an excuse to try out his weapon. Mum defended him, saying it was a moped part, but I knew the truth.

His reputation followed me at school, and teachers began to associate me with trouble. Village life took its toll on Mum, who became depressed, so we sold up and moved to a new house in Aylesbury.

The Moped

Our Moped in Wilstone Field

The Big Freeze, 1962

Once we sold the shop, Mum and I moved to Oldham to live with Aunt Edith, while Dad and Michael stayed in lodgings in Aston Clinton waiting for their new house to be built. I attended Clark's Field Senior School and was somewhat of a celebrity because I was "from London." I told stories about Soho, and it was in Oldham that I first heard the Beatles' song "Love Me Do," which came out in October 1962.

During the three months we stayed in Oldham, I built a balsa wood control-line airplane, a radio transmitter, and learned to ice skate. It was the coldest winter on record. I skated in the streets using second-hand ice skates my mum bought for me.

Short Stay Back to Watford

After Oldham, we returned to Watford to live with my dad's mum. I went back to Francis Coombe Secondary School and rekindled friendships. I built a matchbox-sized transistor radio, a two-transistor reflex receiver, before printed circuit boards were common.

I also missed the moped, so I stole a motorbike from Watford early one morning, drove it several miles, parked it secretly, and returned home. Mum never knew.

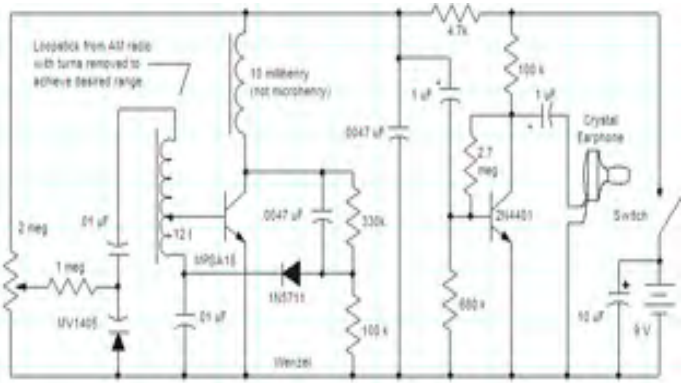
Michael visited sometimes and reconnected with old friends in a pop group. He gave me bell-bottom trousers and a pointed-collar shirt. We went to a dance at Leavesdon and I had a great time. A schoolmate called me a "Mod."

Unfortunately, I was bullied afterward. One ringleader, an Australian boy, had a girlfriend—Pat Petty—who Michael had chatted up at the dance. Once they found out I was his brother, they had it in for me.

My First Matchbox Radio

At 13, I built a two-transistor reflex receiver from components bought in Tottenham Court Road. I soldered it to a small paxolin board, and it worked beautifully—sensitive and selective, no bigger than a matchbox.

My Two Transistor Wireless Receiver



Here Is The Circuit Diagram

My Two-Transistor Wireless ReceiverHere is the circuit diagram

CHAPTER 6

Aylesbury: Our New Home

Our new house was situated on the Bedgrove Estate, in Aylesbury and was ready for us to move in, in April of 1963. However, before we left Wilstone, I had enjoyed riding a moped in an old orchard in the village. It belonged to a friend of Michael, and I was allowed to ride this moped. It was a 50cc NSU Quickly and was kept in his orchard.

Once we had moved into our new house in Aylesbury, I returned to Wilstone and took the engine from the moped frame and put it into a homemade go-kart. I made this go-kart from builder's wood that I took from the building site. I used the moped engine, a set of wheels from a child's three-wheeler tricycle, and various parts from a cement mixer. I began to ride this machine around the new roads on the housing estate. Eventually, the local police stopped me and warned me that it was illegal to ride the go-kart on the roads.

David's Do It Your Self-kart

David's Do It Your Self Kart 1963

Soon after that, the local newspaper gave me a write-up in the Bucks Herald.

An Aylesbury boy was able to return to school after the Easter holidays and proudly tell his friends, "I've made a Go-Kart in the holidays." He is 14 years old.

On Sunday of last week, a friend gave David (pictured above) an old moped. As he was unable to ride it, he dismantled it. He then made a kart frame from some pieces of wood, four old wheels, a set of handlebars, and the moped engine.

Within three days it was in working condition and David estimates it will do 20 miles an hour.

Incidentally, David, who has lived in the town for only a month, has very little real interest in engines. His main hobby is radio construction work, and one of his proudest possessions is a transistor radio, which he built, that is slightly larger than a matchbox.

My NSU Quickly Moped

My Moped

I Steal Push Bikes

During the time before starting my new school, I met another lad called Ian Motrem. We encouraged each other to steal push bikes. In fact, the first day I went to school I stole a bike to come home from school.

Eventually, I got a Francis Barnett 150cc motorbike, which my brother had stolen from Aylesbury College with some other lads. I kept this bike in a field on the Bedgrove Estate near our home. It was great fun to have a motorbike, and I would ride across the fields to school and return home during my lunch hour.

However, one day someone stole my motorbike, and Ian Motrem informed me that he thought he knew the person who had taken it. I went to this person's house early one morning during my paper round and found a motorbike in his garage. It wasn't my bike, but I took it anyway. This ended up in me being charged with garage breaking and being put on probation for two years.

Stolen Francis Barnett 150 CC Motor Bike

My Francis Barnett Motor Bike

CHAPTER 7
I Meet Mrs Grace Knight

My Teenage Years Leaving School

My first recollection of any religious person having any effect on my life was when I was about to leave school, at the age of 15 years old. My mother had spoken to a Mr K. H. Knight who was the proprietor of Central Bucks T.V. and had arranged for me to have a part-time job working after school and on a Saturday. This was until I left school and took up full-time work as an apprentice to Mr Knight.

I am told years later that my letter of job application was so badly written and the spelling so awful it was laughable. However, I was taken on despite my inability to write, spell or use correct grammar, or read properly. This was during my last year at school.

I first met Mrs Grace Knight, one Saturday morning, whilst working for her husband Ken. She was in hot pursuit of her husband and shouting at him for doing something she disapproved of. I was in the workshop with Norman Garret, the other apprentice, and I thought—wow what an awful dragon of a woman—and pitied Mr Knight from that moment on.

Through Mr Knight (Ken) I was introduced to the Radio and Television servicing trade and often went with him into customer's houses to repair TVs and install television aerials. I spent many hours with Ken going to people's homes and soon learned that he was not faithful to his wife. Not that it bothered me, as I knew what Grace was like from our first meeting. The idea of sexual promiscuity was very attractive to me. When we went out enjoying ourselves, Mrs Knight would be left at home or in the workshop minding their two children, Allison and Mark. They also had a big dog called Rufus.

By this time I had left school and was interested in our band, as we wanted to make music. Ian Myers was the bass guitarist and he built his own guitar amplifier from a circuit design published in Practical Wireless. He built the amplifier, I helped him with the speaker cabinet, and it was used in all our future gigs.

I soon began to realize the things I enjoyed were not the things Mrs Knight approved of, or found interesting. I thought she was a right "killjoy" and was boring. She was a Christian—whatever that meant—and I soon realized her values were not the same as mine. What I considered good and enjoyable she would call sin and sinful. She would also complain to her husband that I was always with him and he gave her no time. It seemed she was often driven to despair by him never being in on time and being very unreliable.

Conversation on the Intercom

On one occasion, Norman Garret's mum complained to Mrs Knight that Norman, her son, was not getting the training he needed because Ken was always taking me out with him. I heard this conversation over the shop's intercom. Mrs Knight said yes, I was a nuisance and she did not like me one bit, and it was not good that I should be out with her husband all the time. Upon hearing this, I felt angry and went down the stairs to where they were and confronted them both saying that I had heard what they had said about me. They were embarrassed and I am sure this did not help our relationship. I really thought Mrs Knight was an ogre.

Luton College of Technology

I began to attend Luton College of Technology to learn about Radio and Television Servicing and travelled by bus, one day a week, from Aylesbury to Luton; it was about an hour and a half's run. I think it must have been due

to Mrs Knight and her religion that I began to notice the texts of scripture put up outside churches as I passed by on the bus. They were called "Wayside pulpits." I began to memorise the verses such as:

"Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people""Jesus said if you find life difficult learn of me and the burden I shall give you will not be too difficult to carry"

At that time I had no idea of the meaning of these texts of scripture but found it amusing to quote them to Mrs Knight at any inappropriate moment thinking it would embarrass her.

On one occasion, I remember being dressed in an old blanket made into an undercoat from my brother's Mod anorak. I was standing on the corner of the street near to the workshop one Saturday morning with Mr and Mrs Knight. I quoted at the top of my voice these two scriptures in order to embarrass Mrs Knight. I am not sure how they felt about it, but little did I know that one day I would learn the truth of these texts and become a preacher of the Gospel myself.

Mrs Grace Knight became a great help to me and lived until 2001.
(Click to view)
Obituary Grace Maude Knight

A Confident 15-Year-Old

I enjoyed working for Mr Knight because he seemed to appreciate my help and abilities and would trust me to drive the van at 15 years old. On one occasion he was short of a driver and had to deliver a television. So he dressed me up in a sheepskin coat and gave me dark glasses to wear with instructions to deliver a TV to a house in Quarendon. I was very pleased to do this—even more when it turned out that I was delivering the TV set to one of my school friends called Gillespie.

On another occasion I was given the job of replacing a complete I.F. board on a new Ferguson 850 T.V. receiver in a customer's home. A qualified engineer in a workshop setting normally would have done this, but this unconventional approach was normal to me. Mr Knight had complete confidence in me at the age of 15 years old. I am sure the customer was not at all happy at this 15-year-old repairing their lovely brand new Television

receiver.

During this time I was still making music in the group and when I was 16, Mr Knight's business failed and went into liquidation so I found myself another job. I got an apprenticeship with Sale and Mellor, a Radio and TV shop in Aylesbury. I worked there until I got into trouble with the police when I was sacked at the age of 17 years.

Stolen BSA Bantam

BSA Bantam 125 CC Motor Bike

It was shortly after this time that I got into trouble with the police for breaking into a garage and stealing a motorbike. I had a Francis Barnett 150 CC, which had been stolen from the field where I kept it and a friend of mine told me that it was in this garage along the Tring Road. At first, I was just interested in getting my bike back but when I opened the garage door I was disappointed not to find it—just a 125 BSA Bantam.

I thought, well it's better than nothing so I decided to take it anyway and wheeled it out of the garage and back to our field to use it later. The police later caught me and for this first crime I was charged with garage breaking and put on probation for two years.

A Holiday in Newquay

At this time Mum and Dad took me and my sister Margaret, who was about 3 years old, to Newquay for a holiday. I didn't know what kind of place it was but when we got there it was great. The sand, the sea, and the surfing and views were a treat to see. It was here that I conducted my first blag (a scheme or scam) as I wanted to explore the Headland Hotel, which was an

impressive hotel.

The Hotel Where The Witches Was Filmed

The Headlands Hotel Newquay

On this occasion, I took Margaret by the hand and we walked down the drive right into the hotel. As we approached, a steward of some kind came up to me and asked if he could help. I confidently replied "No thank you, we are staying here." He stood upright, in embarrassment and said, "Oh yes, I remember the little girl." So we blagged it and I wandered around the hotel with my 3-year-old sister, admiring the hotel.

My brother and I were to return to Newquay for a holiday in 1967, just before we were both sent to prison.

CHAPTER 8
Our Rock Group

It was after this that I decided I wanted to play the electric guitar. I remember a lad called Alan Lawrence, from Tring Secondary Modern School, bringing an electric guitar to school. He plugged it into the school's record player, and it sounded great. I wanted to learn to play like him.

The first guitar I owned was an electric Hofner Futurama Two, and a friend called Steve showed me how to play Twist and Shout. That really got me interested in playing properly.

Stealing an Amplifier from the Catholic Church

I put together my own guitar amplifier using a P.A. amplifier I had stolen

from the Catholic Church on the North Orbital Road in Watford. It didn't bother me, even when my conscience spoke to me about it being wrong. I believed the Catholics were wrong anyway—according to my mum.

My First Guitar Stolen Amplifier

Liner Concord 30 Amplifier

Top View using EL34 Output valves in push pull

Underneath the Chassis

Hand Wired Main Chassis

(I had inherited a prejudice against the Catholic Church from my mum, and so when I took the amplifier, I ignored my conscience by telling myself they were wrong anyway.)

I began to get more interested in making music, and during my last year at school, we formed a band and played at the end-of-term school dance.

Our gym teacher, Mr. Pottinger, organised the event.

The Fowler Mean — Our Rock Group

Ian Myers was the bass guitarist, and later Robby Woods became our lead guitarist. On that occasion, though, at the school do, Willie Barrett was lead guitarist. He was the only one of us to gain musical fame. He became known as Wild Willy Barrett and played music with John Otway.

A Secret

Willie Barrett's dad was a brilliant man—a musician and a craftsman. He made an excellent bass guitar for either Willie or his friend. He wanted an amplifier for Willie's electric guitar, and the bass player friend said he had a 30-watt Linear Concord amplifier for sale at a small price. I quickly jumped in and bought it before they made up their minds. That's the one in my picture.

However, I agreed to sell my 15-watt Linear Concord amplifier (the one I had stolen from the Catholic Church in North Watford) to his dad for slightly less money, and they bought it from me. I was very pleased, but felt a bit guilty because they got a rough deal—they really should have had the 30-watt amplifier, which was much better than mine. Little did they know I had stolen it.

My Vox A.C. 30 Amplifier

My Vox AC 30 (Cost Second hand £60)

I had a new amplifier—a Vox AC 30—and it replaced the amplifier I had stolen from the Catholic Church.

One of our regular Saturday night spots was Courts Dance School, just off Kingsbury Square. Here's our music play set:

The Fowler Mean (Play Set) Click to view and listen

After leaving school, we reformed the group and began playing at various dance halls. I named the group The Fowler Mean. We often played at Courts School of Dancing in George Street, Aylesbury, and other venues like Tring, The Bull's Head, and Anthony Hall in Aston Clinton.

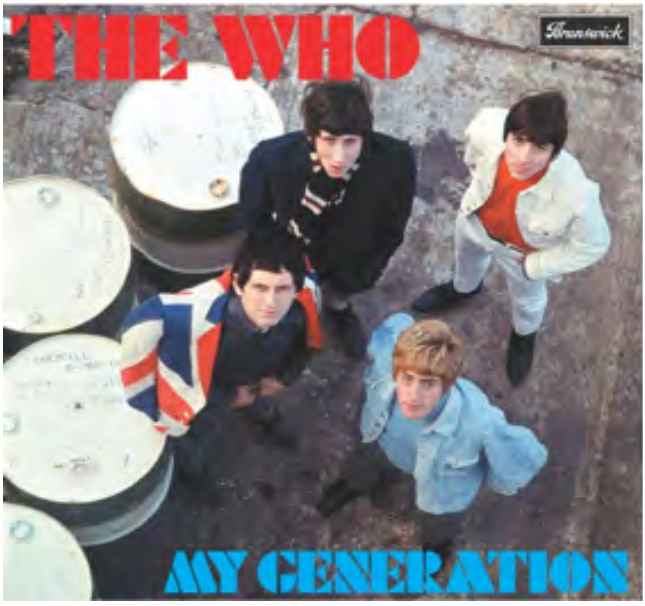
One of the other bands we played alongside was The Must Be Blue, with the organist Pat Archer.

We played covers from groups such as The Rolling Stones, The Who, The Small Faces, The Kinks, Otis Redding, and John Lee Hooker. We also played My Generation, though I knew we didn't get it quite right. To this day, I never figured out the correct chords. We played four downstrokes on G, followed by four on F—but it wasn't quite right. I always thought if I ever met Pete Townsend, I'd ask him how to play those opening chords.

The Fowler Mean

Dave Clarke (left) with Robby Woods (top) Ian Myers

Our Favourite Band The Who



John Entwhistle, Pete Townsend, Keith Moon, Roger Daultary

My favourite band was The Who. They brought something new to music—volume. My Generation was their breakthrough hit. I remember hearing them at the Grosvenor Dance Hall in Aylesbury. Pete Townshend was on lead guitar, John Entwistle on bass, Keith Moon on drums, and Roger Daltrey was the lead singer. No band could touch them—they were brilliant.

We saw them several times in places like Borehamwood and the Bedford Corn Exchange.

Pete Townshend Amplifier line Up

Two A.C. 100 Amplifiers in Parallel

John Entwhistle Amplifier line up

4 X A.C. 60 watt Vox Bass

The volume added another dimension to the experience. I call it Rock and Real Music—it added depth, and none of us had experienced anything like it before.

Malcolm Kirkham used to be one of our singers, making us five in the band. We used to go out together on our scooters. I had inherited my brother's Lambretta TV 175cc, and Malcolm had a 150cc new Lambretta. We began to mix with the Mods in Aylesbury and the surrounding area.

Malcolm had been sacked from the group for messing about. He would

always arrive late, never in time to set up equipment. He was constantly combing his hair or pressing his trousers and generally fooling around. He was nicknamed "Cocoa the Clown."

The Mod Image

Lambretta Scooter Blond Girl Friend Sue

After mixing with the lads in Aylesbury, I quickly found out my brother was well known. When people learned I was Mike Clarke's brother, it was like having a licence to do or say anything. I was accepted. I was one of the boys.

I remembered the parties my brother had told me about and wanted to get involved in all the fun—pep pills, scooters, Mod fashion, dances, girls, and permissive sex. All of it seemed positive and attractive; we were looking for a good time.

My image of my brother was that he was a character who had a way with girls. That's how I wanted to be—famous like him.

Oxford Bags

I remember my brother visiting us at Rockley Sands in Bournemouth while I was on holiday with my parents. I must have been about 15 years old. He came dressed in a brown suit with 22-inch Oxford Bag trousers, small turn-ups, a white crew-neck red-striped T-shirt, and brown brogue shoes. This was the Mod fashion.

He told me he had to return to Aylesbury to do repairs and tidy up Mum and Dad's house after a party that had wrecked the place. Apparently, the Mods from all over the district had been to the party. The carpets had been rolled up and put in the garage. The bathroom sink had been pulled off the wall when a girl got drunk and sat in it. He told me about the promiscuity, and it all sounded like good fun.

This was 1963 or '64 when The Beatles and The Rolling Stones were rising to fame. Gerry and the Pacemakers had a hit at the time called I Like It.

My First Girlfriend

I met Susan at a Friday night dance at Aylesbury College. She was 15 years old and looked great with her blonde hair in a bob style. I was 16, wearing my navy blue Mod suit, and had arrived on my Lambretta.

I asked her to dance, and later to take her home. She agreed. I was thrilled and covered my learner plate, which was under the rear number plate, and took her home. That was the beginning of my first love.

The relationship only lasted a few months. When she said she wanted to end it, I was heartbroken. She tried to comfort me by saying I'd find someone else—but I never did. After that, my only interest in girls was sex—not friendship or anything else.

Another Who song expressed my emotions at the time. I first heard it at Borehamwood.

Drug Curiosity and Scooter Culture

During this time, Malcolm and I, both 16, began mixing with the Mods in Aylesbury. We got curious about pep pills (purple hearts, black bombers, and Dexedrine) and smoking hashish or grass. While waiting to get our hands on some, we experimented with smoking crushed codeine tablets and dried banana skins.

There was a pub in Aylesbury called the "Flea Pit" in Kingsbury Square. We heard we could buy hash there.

Car Knapping (Stealing Cars)

Not long after this, my brother came home one evening around 9:30 p.m. in a hurry. He'd recently been released from Detention Centre. Our parents were away, and I had a girlfriend over. He told me about a narrow escape from the police. About six of his friends had been in a stolen car when they were stopped by the police on Tring Road. They all jumped out and ran.

Soon after, my brother was sent to Borstal Training for another crime. Still, it all seemed like a good lifestyle, and I wanted more.

I discovered I could buy chloroform from a chemist, which was better than sniffing carbon tetrachloride or glue—common among other youths at the time. After using some, Malcolm once believed he could fly on his scooter. He broke his arm and smashed the scooter, but fortunately not his head—he was wearing a deerstalker crash helmet he had stolen days earlier.

Aylesbury Lads

The names of some of the lads we knew were:

Stuart Knight, Keith Guntrip, Ian Wilton, Dill Dorwrick, Terry Tatem (now deceased), Phil Davis, Brian Collier, Mickey Coil, Roy Miles, John James, Dave King, Jimmy Findlay, and others like them.

They had one thing in common—they wanted fun. These were the lads of Aylesbury. (Time of writing: the year 2000)

My Lambretta Scooter

Lambretta TV 175 CC

At that time after being sacked from the group we began going to a nightclub called the Banbury Gaff. Here we would stay up all night taking pep pills (we used to say getting blocked), dancing and talking, and in the morning end up in a café eating toast before driving back to Aylesbury. Soon after this Malcolm began to mix with the lads from Oxford and he was later sentenced to some time in prison for some crime or other. During this time my brother was in Borstal and at the Gaff I met Alan Dodd. He was my brother's partner in crime and had escaped from Borstal and was living on a barge in Oxford. He told me at the time he had a gun and all this type of living impressed me as it seemed rather exciting. We would spend time at

the Gaff talking with other lads about the crimes we had done and planned various schemes and bragged and boasted about things we had done.

From this experience of mine I can say that there is no prevention or cure from this kind of criminal mind set. Once on that route you are on the road to serious crime, as all that I knew at that time will confirm. I can also say that a girlfriend could really help someone like that avoid getting into too much crime.

The Great Train Robbery

It wasn't long after the Great Train Robbery that we were finding our feet as criminals.

The Scene of the Robbery 1963 – Bridgo Bridge

The Scene of the Robbery 1963

The great train robbery had taken place on August 8, 1963, at the Bridgo Bridge in Linslade, just up the road from us in Aylesbury. The thieves laid an ambush for the mail train running from Glasgow to Euston and stole more than £2 million. For 125 years, the train had run uninterrupted until that night, when it was stopped by a red light in Buckinghamshire. Bruce Reynolds, who crafted the robbery, was caught in 1969 and sentenced to 10 years in jail. We were very impressed at this crime.

The Kray Twins

In the 1960s, the Ronnie and Reggie Kray were seen as prosperous and charming celebrity nightclub owners and were part of the Swinging London scene. A large part of their fame was due to their non-criminal activities as popular figures on the celebrity circuit, being photographed by David Bailey on more than one occasion; and socialising with lords, MPs, socialites and

show business characters such as the actors George Raft, Judy Garland, Diana Dors, Barbara Windsor and singer Frank Sinatra.

"They were the best years of our lives. They called them the swinging sixties. The Beatles and the Rolling Stones were rulers of pop music, Carnaby Street ruled the fashion world... and me and my brother ruled London. We were fucking untouchable..." – Ronnie Kray, in his autobiographical book, My Story.

The Twins

Ronnie and Reggie Kray

Kray's Imprisonment

On 8 May 1968, the Krays and 15 other members of their firm were arrested. Many witnesses came forward now that the Krays' reign of intimidation was over, and it was relatively easy to gain a conviction.

The Krays and 14 others were convicted, with one member of the firm being acquitted. One of the firm members who provided a lot of the information to the police was arrested yet only for a short period. Out of the 17 official firm members, 16 were arrested and convicted.

The twins' defence, under their counsel John Platts-Mills QC, consisted of flat denials of all charges and the discrediting of witnesses by pointing out their criminal past. The judge, Mr Justice Melford Stevenson, said: "In my view, society has earned a rest from your activities." Both were sentenced to life imprisonment, with a non-parole period of 30 years for the murders of Cornell and McVitie, the longest sentences ever passed at the Old Bailey for murder. Their brother Charlie was jailed for 10 years for his part in the murders.

Mods, Scooters, Bikes & the Bubble Car

Shortly after my brother came out of Borstal a form of transport was

required for two. A solution to this came through my brother who persuaded me to swap my scooter for a two-seater Issetta 350 cc bubble car. I had inherited the scooter from Michael when he was sent to Borstal but by now it had been renovated. I had rebuilt it in the spare bedroom at home and resprayed it British racing green. It was a Lambretta TV 175 cc. The fuel tank and tool compartment were stove enamelled gold. It had a dual seat with a passenger backrest and very little extras. There had been crazes whereby crash bars, wing mirrors, wheel racks and anything made of chrome were generally attached to such machines, but not mine. I was proud of this Lambretta. It had to go to make way for the sky-blue Bubble Car.

Pete Townsend Gives Us a Lift

Before this time we had to thumb lifts to get to where we wanted if the scooter was out of action. On one occasion we were keen to get to Bedford, as The Who were playing at the Corn Exchange. We were dressed in our Mod mohair suits and carried a small suitcase with our night things in. We got as far as Ampthill and were stuck at the corner of the Ampthill to Bedford road and were about 20 miles from Bedford. We were stuck and Michael went into a pub to get a drink whilst I stayed on the corner trying to thumb a lift.

To my relief, just after Michael had gone into the pub, a two-seater red coupé Jaguar pulled up to offer me a lift. I rushed up to the window of the car, carrying our small suitcase, feeling very relieved that I had a lift, but at the same time anxious as my brother was still in the pub. I said to the driver cheekily would he mind waiting a minute. The driver was fine and said OK. However, to my surprise and amazement I realised who the driver was—it was Pete Townsend, the lead guitarist of The Who. Of course, that made our day.

By this time Michael had arrived and we both squeezed into the front seat of Pete's Jaguar. We told him who we were and that we were off to Bedford to their gig at the Corn Exchange. As we drove into Bedford we stopped and Pete asked me to ask some girls the directions to where The Who were playing. Sure enough they knew and pointed us in the direction of the Corn Exchange. It was a great evening.

Pete Townsend's Jaguar

Pete Townsend MK1 Jaguar

CHAPTER 9

The Bubble Car

The bubble car belonged to David Ness of Chiltern Avenue in Aylesbury, who had been given it by his brother. There was only one thing wrong with it. We had to bump start it as the starter motor did not work (push it and then put it in gear and jump in once the engine had started).

Our New Form Or Transport

Front Loader 300 BMW Issetta Bubble Car

In this vehicle we had many adventures because we were liberated from the two-wheeled scooter and could cram four people in this vehicle if we wanted. Neither of us had passed our driving test to drive a normal car but I had passed my test to drive a mo torbike and my licence allowed me to drive

the three-wheeler bubble car. We were able to carry blankets, spare clothing, etc., all in the dry. We carried all that we needed for a night out in that case. It was ideal for catching girls. The front opened up and it could be driven with the front door open. All we did was drive up to the bird we wanted to catch and stop in front of her. Open up the door and drive forward. She had no option but to fall in and we would drive off with her in the car. It was questioned—was any girl safe with us around?

Dr Clarke's Case

Whilst Michael was in Borstal, he had made for me a wooden case, like a briefcase, that he had written on the side: "Dr Clarke." This was for a bit of fun. However, I carried in that case a bottle of chloroform, whiskey and a fake gun (it was a starter pistol that fired blanks and looked real). We used the case to frighten people, as they soon learned what was inside the case.

The Doctors Case

Dr Clarke Case

On one occasion we went into the Crombie shop, just off Kingsbury Square, intending to frighten the manager of the shop. I had a blue mohair navy suit made to measure by him. However, the jacket did not fit right, and even after many alterations it still didn't fit properly. This was whilst Michael was in Borstal. So on Michael's release, and him hearing about the suit, we decided to get our own back and frighten the manager to pieces. He was about 21 years old and we were younger. So we went into the shop and put Dr Clarke's case on the counter and proceeded to get the chloroform out of the case intending to put the manager to sleep. When he realised what was about to take place, he was terrified and I had to stop Michael from knocking him out with the chloroform.

Off to Margate

On one occasion we set off to Margate on a bank holiday—this was a custom amongst our generation of Mods. We all seemed to migrate to Yarmouth, Margate or Brighton. This was Whitsun bank holiday, 1966, and Mod and Rocker riots were common. On this trip to the coast, my brother was true to form. He had borrowed a .22 Webley air pistol from Pat Jones and was determined to have a good time. He had fired the occasional pop shot at one or two girls' bottoms, which caused much amusement. I just went along with it, suppressing my natural cautiousness.

As we passed through towns in London, the air pistol was used to cause alarm. I shrivel at the thought of what was done. People reported the mystery shooter, and at least one woman was wounded in Lewisham.

Caught by the Police

Traffic police en route to Margate stopped us. The men briefly searched our car but found nothing suspicious. My brother had hidden the pistol just in time. We didn't allow this close shave to stop our adventure. Persons bathing at night were targets for our folly. It was not intended to wound or harm—but that was inevitable.

During the weekend we moved on to Ramsgate. Again, with a spirit of naughtiness, we decided to steal a tray of peaches from a fruit and veg shop. The bubble car was our getaway vehicle. I took the peaches and my brother drove the car down the hill. Naturally, we were spotted.

Our foolishness came to an end when the same traffic police from earlier picked us up on our way home. A search of the car revealed a stolen handbag, air gun pellets, and the air pistol itself. We were arrested and charged with malicious wounding and stealing. I was granted bail, my brother was not.

We had decided I would say I had done the shooting and Michael was asleep. This was to try and save him from prison. I thought I'd only get a fine—but I was wrong. My mother managed to obtain bail for Michael and we appeared in Kent Quarter Sessions several months later. The result: I was sent to Borstal. That prison officer I had once spoken to had been right.

Bubble Car Blows Up

During the time we were awaiting our court appearance we went one night to Bedford in the bubble car. On the way home the car caught fire and

blew up—as the petrol tank was above the engine. We walked to Woburn Green and decided to sleep the night there. We found a mattress and some blankets and made a bed on the village green. The police woke us up in the morning, and let us go after hearing our story.

I Get the Sack

Once my boss Mr Sale found out I'd been caught by the police, he gave me the sack. In revenge, I planned a break-in. I knew where the shop money was stored overnight.

The Break-In

I instructed my apprentice, Pat Jones, to break into the shop. His task was to lift the tiles off the roof, break into the loft and then the ceiling, go into the rear toilet and take the money. A great plan—only trouble was, the money wasn't where I said it would be. He got in, didn't get caught, but came away with nothing.

The Fire Arm

The Offending Weapon

CHAPTER 10

Canterbury Prison

When my brother appeared in the Kent Quarter Sessions court I pleaded guilty to the charges of malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license and my brother pleaded not guilty on all accounts. I was sentenced to Borstal Training, which meant I could do any time between 6 months to two years. That would depend on me to some degree on how I behaved.

Canterbury Prison TogetherMy brother was detained in custody until he appeared in court a month later during, which time we were both detained

in. Our time in Canterbury Prison was in one sense a time of continuous fun and just another of our good times together, even though I had just received an awful sentence. Upon arrival at Canterbury Prison we were taken into the reception hall. Here we were with other newly sentenced young persons and being with my brother made it that much easier for me, and it gave me confidence because he had been to Rochester Borstal, and Detention Centre on two occasions, before and he knew the ropes.

In the reception hall we were issued with prison clothing. Our fingerprints were taken and photographed and we were each given a number. After this the medical officer (all prison officers were called screws) had inspected us and we were taken to our cell (called a Peter). At that time we were three's up. My brother and I and a lad from Liverpool. In this cell we were to remain for a few days until we were issued work. The cell was approximately 12 foot by 9 foot and housed a bunk bed and a single bed. A table, chair, water jug and urinal pot.

Canterbury Prison

Canterbury Prison Gates

At half past six each morning our sleep was broken with a bang on the door and words saying "Slop out". This meant we had to get up make up our beds and empty the urinal pot. We then could get hot water for a wash in a jug for a shave and return to our cell. A razor blade was issued and collected after and then we were banged up until breakfast.

At breakfast time we were unlocked and had to line up in single file to collect our food. This was served up on a specially shaped metal tray, which was recessed in three places to retain the food. A typical breakfast would be a scoop of porridge, four slices of bread, a knob of margarine, a sausage or piece of bacon with beans and a large mug of tea.

The bread dipped in porridge became one of my favourite meals but on one occasion this practice of dipping bread in my porridge offended one inmate (when I was in Dover Borstal) he expressed he thought what I was doing was a disgusting habit. I just ignored him with contempt.

One of the ways we past time, when locked up in the cell, was to play "Blind Man Buff". One of us would be blindfolded whilst the other two crept about and hid from the other, while the blind man tried to catch the others. There were all sorts of places to hide in such a small cell. We enjoyed this game we would jump from bed to bed which made the game that much more fun.

During this time I found time killing boring so I tried to read one or two books. The books I found I could read were James Bond as these were about my level and the Beano and Dandy comics. Any other reading would be too difficult to me.

On the days we were not working, each morning and afternoon was exercise. This was where all the inmates walked as a body around the prison yard. No doubt each prisoner looked at the high walls and every building looking for a possible way to escape. During this time we could talk with whom we pleased, those that attempted an escape were made to wear yellow patches so they could be spotted easily. These times became a time of communication and formed the prison grape vine.

Hair Style ChangeOn one occasion I decided to change my hairstyle. So during the wash period my brother removed the safety edge from the Government Issue razor and was able to shave my head. It was much easier to wash in the mornings with no hair and much fresher. However I had gone against the prison rules and was put on a Governors report and put in solitary confinement for a period of time.

At the meal time it cause an amusing stir and I was to get laughed at when one of the cooks slapped a handful of strawberry jam on my bald head. After this when my hair grew a little I was able to razor a parting in my hair which was really the beginning of the hair fashions for the skin head.

What Sentence Have You Got?I could not help but notice the various characters and the first points of conversation were "What sentence had you got and what was your crime, or crimes". After this an inquiry would be

made as to your previous convictions and prison sentencing.

Our time at Canterbury came to an end when my brother was found guilty and was sentenced to two years prison at the Kent Crown Court. I was a witness at his trial and was detained in the cells below the courtroom. When my brother was brought below, handcuffed to a prison officer, I was shocked and disappointed that he had been found guilty. In fact all our plans had come to nothing and I was to do a stretch in Borstal. He was found guilty of malicious wounding as well and was sentenced to 2-year prison.

On that occasion my mother was not allowed to see either of us and we were taken from the cells in Kent back to Canterbury prison that dark wet night. As we approached the prison gate I saw my mum with tears in her eyes outside the prison gate. We both waved and motioned to the prison officer to say she had come to see us and his reaction was, "So what, she can't see you because you are now prisoners". She had not got a visiting permit. She had travelled from Kent to Canterbury late that night to try and see us but she was rejected.

The Scrubs

Wormwood Scrubs

From that time we hated that prison officer called Titmouse. He was about 6 foot 7 inches tall. My brother, weeks later, after we were separated laid into this screw because of the hate. He head-butted him (nutted) and of course was on a governor's report and put in solitary confinement. This I heard through the grape vine when I was at Wormwood scrubs awaiting my allocation to Dover Borstal.

Wormwood ScrubsI was moved from Canterbury Prison to Wormwood

Scrubs in London, which was a Borstal allocation centre. After a period of four weeks it was decided I was to go to Dover Borstal. A closed Borstal called the Citadel. For the first time I was on my own and was moved from one cell to another having to share some times with others. I did not really enjoy things here, as it was lonely being on my own.

Dover Borstal (The Citadel)

Dover Borstal (The Citadel)

We were allowed to go to church on a Sunday, which I did to break the monotony. However I remember being horrified by the fact that I saw some inmate tearing pages out of the bible to roll cigarettes. This was probably the first sense of me acknowledging the existence or fear of God.

When at Dover Borstal I was placed in an open dormitory with five other lads. Here I had to learn to survive. There was a 6 foot 6 inch Lad nicknamed Te Oh who was bullied mercilessly by a 5 foot 6 spectacled bottle job, called Vince Bowker. I saw this bullying the moment I arrived and Te Oh was made to do this, do that, and he would say yes Vince, no Vince and so on hoping to get off lightly. In the end Te Oh turned and lashed out on Vince Bowker and that put a stop to that. I was determined I was not going to let that happen to me. I stood my own ground whenever I sensed anyone trying to bully me. I was in fact nicknamed Flash Clarke because I had all kinds of goodies like, cocoa, coffee, milk and sugar and even Ovaltine and had one of the senior green ties make me Ovaltine in the morning.

Borstal BoyOne bully, 6 footer, was moved into our dormitory because he had mercilessly bullied another inmate. We got on well until I tied his

shoelaces together one morning for a joke but he didn't see it that way. When he realized who it was that did it he threw these tied shoes at me in anger and this gave me a black eye. As he came at me to hit me I was quick enough to hit him on the jaw bringing him down to the ground. After that he kept out of my way and the screw that could see my black eye ignored it. I think they must have known how to deal with bullies.

Electrical Installation CourseWhilst at Dover I went on a six months training course doing Electrical Installations and I worked really hard obtaining top marks every week and I used to be rewarded half an ounce of tobacco for coming top of the class. I traded this with an inmate for his ration of milk each morning and cornflakes and an egg each Sunday morning.

We had to attend church on a Sunday and were marched to church in whatever the weather. We would have to be dressed in our best gear after Sunday morning inspection. I remember I had no sense of respect for God or anything like that. In fact when the vicar Rev. Whally took us for talks before we were to leave Borstal I can remember ridiculing him in front of all the inmates. I thought it was a huge joke.

Paternity SuitWhilst serving my time in Borstal I was served with a summons to appear in court to answer a paternity suit. A former girlfriend was pregnant and I presume the Social Services had made her declare whom the father of the child was in order to get the finances but I am not sure as I never spoke to her about it. In fact I do not remember knowing anything about it until I had to appear in court. The first time in court I admitted I was the father because I could have been even though I knew she had been with other men. At the time I was ordered to pay maintenance out of my three shillings and six pence a week, at the rate of one shilling and three pence per week. I had no idea of the serious nature of being a father or bringing up children or any idea of taking responsibility for my actions.

My mother however was very anxious and after listening to the evidence given by the girl, she maintained it was not possible for me to be the father, as the timing of the events did not fit. She encouraged me to appeal and she really fought the case for me. This I did and with the aid of a Solicitor the girl had to prove I was the father of the child. When I look back it must have been humiliating for the girl because she had to explain when and where these events took place. My defence solicitor asked where the event or events took place. With incredulity he questioned her how could things take place in a bubble car, in the daylight. This I think on reflection was humiliating

for her.

The suit was not proven and I was released from the charge. My probation officer Mr Moorland Hughes asked me many years later, when I became a Christian and had to appear in court over my confessions to many crimes, "Was I the father of the child?", I replied I might have been.

The child was called David and my mother says he had ginger hair. She had seen him out with his mother in Aylesbury whilst I was still in Borstal. He must be around 33 years old now.

I met all kinds of lads here in Borstal, car thieves, burglars, forgers, and gamblers. None of us had any idea for the reason of our existence but were probably looking for the best in life never finding it.

When I was released I was determined to have a good time. I wanted the best clothes, a good car, a speedboat, and a caravan. You name it I wanted all these things and intended to obtain them by one means or another. I had learned many criminal ways and had no intention going straight. I just had no intention of getting caught at any crime I may choose to be involved in.

CHAPTER 11

My Release from Borstal

I was released from Borstal a year later, and during this time I began getting involved in all sorts of things—mostly criminal activity—in Aylesbury.

My Gold Mini

My First Car 850 CC Mini

I bought my first real car for £100 when I came out of Borstal. It was a

gold Mini, 850cc. I decided to visit my brother, who was now in Maidstone Prison. I went to see him whenever I could. While he was there, he met a senior inmate from Cyprus who told him some fantastic story about smuggling gold—one we both believed. We started dreaming of being involved in gold smuggling.

The plan was for my brother to leave prison on home leave, then go to Greece. There, with a contact supposedly arranged by the Greek man, we would pretend to be newlyweds—with suitable partners—and smuggle gold strapped under our clothes. The idea was that as newlyweds, customs officers would be less likely to stop us. It sounded exciting, and that was exactly what I wanted.

However, the contact never existed. It was all made up. When we found out, we were hugely disappointed. But my brother decided he couldn't face going back to prison, so he simply didn't return. He changed his name to Kenny and managed to stay on the run for a whole year before being caught while working on a building site in Aylesbury.

London Life and a Joke at Breakfast

At the time, I was on a government training course in Enfield, Middlesex, while Michael got a job with a shop-fitting company in London. He lived above a shop near King's Cross, so I was able to visit him during the week.

One morning, just for a laugh, we went to the local café in our pyjamas and dressing gowns, bringing our own cornflakes. We asked for bowls, milk, and sugar—it was all just harmless fun and went down well.

Eventually, Michael grew tired of being there alone. One night, we loaded up the company's tools and equipment and returned to Aylesbury to our parents' house.

Pat Jones and the First Skinhead Cut

During this time, I renewed my friendship with Pat Jones. We did many things together. My brother had a girlfriend now, and I was still seeking fun.

One day, I decided to show Pat the effects of chloroform. I knocked him out completely, then cut chunks of hair from his head. When he came to, he had no idea what I'd done—until he got home and saw his mother's face. I found it hilarious.

Pat took it well and decided to get a full skinhead haircut—the first one in Aylesbury. Back then, shaving your head wasn't fashionable, but Pat did it, and I was proud of him. He might have even set the trend for skinhead fashion.

Mods, Skinheads, and Greasers in Yarmouth

On a bank holiday in 1969, while working for Radio Rentals in Hemel Hempstead, Pat and I decided to go to Yarmouth to meet other Mods—who later became known as skinheads.

I took the company Ford van, which we planned to sleep in. That Sunday afternoon, I was resting in the back of the van while Pat was out with the lads. They had a run-in with a group of Greasers—biker gangs who fought with knives and motorbike chains. Very much like the Mods vs Rockers scenes from Quadrophenia.

Mods On a Bank Holiday Weekend

Mods at Margate and News Reports

Pat suddenly came running to the van, shouting for me to run or do something. I looked out to see a crowd of Greasers grinning and charging toward the van. I quickly locked the doors and jumped into the driver's seat, hoping to escape. As I struggled to start the engine, they were hitting the van with chains, trying to tip it over. I managed to reverse and get away, barely avoiding a beating—all thanks to Pat.

On the way home, we tried towing a four-wheeled seaside bike from Yarmouth. Pat rode it behind the van until we decided it was too risky and abandoned it outside a pub near Norwich. We laughed about it all the way home.

Newquay Here We Come

In the summer of 1968, shortly after my brother and I were both released

from prison, we decided to go on holiday. Michael had a Bedford van fitted with a mattress on the roof under a tarp—that was our home for six weeks. We headed for Newquay in Cornwall, the place of sun and surfing.

Our Bedford Van

This Is Where We Slept For 6 Weeks

The Failed Speedboat Heist

Our first mischievous plan was to steal a speedboat from Barnstaple. We even made a tow hitch from borrowed tools in a workshop. But when it came time to swim out in the dark cold water, we both lost our nerve and called it off.

The Beatles and the Atlantic Hotel

We had heard the Beatles had stayed at the Atlantic Hotel in Newquay while filming Magical Mystery Tour. This only added to Newquay's allure for us.

Working at the Gull Rock Hotel

We got temporary work at the Gull Rock Hotel—Michael as a kitchen porter and me as a waiter. But the lifestyle didn't suit us. After one day, we stayed in bed and skipped work. When they came to wake us, we acted hungover. Surprisingly, they gave us the benefit of the doubt and didn't sack us. Still, we quit and left with £1 each.

Before we left, we jumped into bed with a couple of the chambermaids—one being Angela. When the manager's wife discovered this, she was horrified and sacked the girls. I felt bad about that afterward.

Petrol Station Theft

Low on funds, we planned to rob a petrol station. Michael wore a wig for

disguise, but it made him look even more suspicious, so I took over. While the attendant was busy, I snuck up to the till, grabbed the money, changed clothes, and walked off unnoticed.

Return to Aylesbury

Eventually, Michael started writing to his girlfriend, and we returned home. He spent more time with her, and I spent more time with Pat Jones—teaching him all the wrong things.

TV Repair Job and a Sailing Trip

At 20, I got a job with Radio Rentals in Hemel Hempstead and was the only colour TV engineer in the branch—with a company car.

That summer, we went on a sailing trip to Shoreham with Ken and Grace Knight. Grace stayed with a Christian friend named Tom in Brighton.

The History Of The Jews And 1967

He told us all about the Bible, Israel, and prophecy. I was intrigued and even began telling my college friends about it. I read Deuteronomy and began wondering about the bigger picture.

Pat Jones and the Bully

Back in Aylesbury, Pat was still at school and had trouble with a bully. One evening, at the Grange School youth club, I gave Pat a heavy rubber torch hidden in my Crombie coat. I instructed him to confront the bully, distract him, then wallop him. It worked. The bully never bothered Pat again. Looking back, I wonder—how would Jesus have us deal with bullies today? Back then, I wasn't a Christian, but in Pat's case, the tactic worked.

CHAPTER 12

Conversion from Crime to Christ

A Search for Meaning

Having worked through and experienced many things, I often thought about life and its meaning. I could recall the absolute emptiness of my soul after going out for the evening and coming home. All was empty—and what was the point to it all? I was seeking an answer to life, the universe, and everything.

A Bad LSD Trip

The following is an account, taken from memory and notes, of my experience of conversion to Jesus Christ on Friday, 16th January 1970.

Towards the end of 1969, I was continuing my studies at Luton College, learning Radio and Television Servicing. We would often engage in discussions, and it was quite easy to divert our lecturer onto subjects like spiritualism and the like. We discussed what we would do if another world war came, the future as portrayed by Nostradamus, drugs, and our own experiences.

At that time, I was informed of a new film called Easy Rider and wanted to see it. On one occasion, I obtained some hashish mixed with opium and smoked it during our break time. It was so effectual that I made use of the sick room at college to sleep and enjoy the illusionary effects, which amused my student friends.

In January 1970, I obtained four tablets of LSD from Peter Coppenhall, a student friend from Bedford. He was one of my fellow students at Luton College. I decided to take them the following Friday night, 16th January 1970.

The Night Begins

That Friday night, my brother and I each took half a tablet, and Pat Jones had a quarter. Pat had been a close friend of mine—only just 16 years old—and I used to think of him as my apprentice. I taught him all my bad ways. There was little we did not do together. I had known him while he was still at school and had encouraged him in crime, sniffing chloroform, smoking marijuana and hashish, drunkenness, violence, and permissive sex. Amongst our friends, he was known as "Bones"—Patrick Bones.

My brother was going out that night with his girlfriend, Karen Mead, so Pat and I decided to walk up to town. We didn't risk driving—we didn't know the effect the drug would have. I wore old clothes, not knowing what might happen to us.

We tried thumbing a lift but eventually caught a bus and got off at the bottom of the High Street. As we passed the cinema, I noticed the film Easy Rider was being shown. We decided to see it.

We wanted someone else to join us—someone in their right state of mind. We went up to the billiard hall and found Bernie Gilbert and Mike Ellis. They agreed to come only if they too could have some acid. So we got a taxi back to my house to get the rest of the LSD. Bernie took half a tablet, and Mike took the other quarter.

Tripping in the Cinema

All four of us were now tripping on acid as we watched Easy Rider. We arrived at the cinema around 8:45 PM. I fumbled with my ticket as the effects began to take hold. Bernie and Mike suggested we sit in the balcony, but I thought, "What if we jump off?" I followed them upstairs. We sat two in front and two behind. Mike and Bernie hadn't yet begun tripping and seemed normal.

The Film Easy Rider

Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper

Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper were on screen. The film was intense—lighting, sound, and mood. But Bernie and Mike began jumping about, irritating me. I stayed seated long after the film ended. Eventually, we got up, but I was already deep into the trip, and my thoughts began to echo and multiply.

Outside, I told the others, "Man, you're all on the wrong scene—you can't be turned on." Mike and Bernie mocked me, saying I'd turned into a wizard and belonged at The Dark Lantern, a local pub. My trip descended into paranoia.

Mike suggested a fight with some blokes across the street. I declined, thinking they were testing me. Bernie made faces, pulled gestures. I hid in a

shop doorway. Pat pulled Bernie away, saying I didn't understand.

The Horror Deepens

We went to the Crown Pub. Brian Sale came up and spoke, but I was lost in paranoia and nonsense. I claimed I was drunk to excuse my rambling.

I saw my brother Michael with Karen and told him what was happening. He laughed and mimicked winding me up like a toy. My mind distorted. I fled the pub. Pat followed. I feared the others were behind us. Everything glowed like Alice in Wonderland as we walked down Richford's Hill and along Friarage Road.

We ended up at Mount Street, where Ken and Grace Knight lived. Jock Macallion was just leaving in his car. I jumped in beside him and told him my plight. He said, "Dave, you are a worried man." I had to run again. I entered 24 Mount Street and tried to explain to Ken and Grace, but they didn't understand. Grace led me to the summerhouse to lie down.

No one could help me. My brother couldn't help. My friends couldn't help. The Knights couldn't help. I couldn't help myself.

Calling on the Name of the Lord

In desperation, I cried out, "Jesus, please help me."

My mind went blank. His name appeared in my imagination, but the torment returned. I called again—His name appeared twice. Again—and it appeared a third and fourth time, forming a square of light in complete darkness.

I began to weep, not knowing why. Grace came to the door, and at that moment, a flood of guilt overcame me. I was convicted of the sin of adultery. I called her in and asked, "Do you realise how bad I am?" I told her I didn't know what to do.

Grace had often spoken to me about the Lord. She sat down and quoted Scripture:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

—John 3:16 (KJV)

Jesus Spoke to Me

At that moment, Jesus spoke to me. I heard His voice as clearly as I am writing this:

"Dave, I am with you. You have been searching for a long time. This is what our Father says: What you have been going through is nothing compared to what hell is like."

I replied, weeping, "Thank you, Jesus… thank you."

Grace thought I was speaking to her, but she didn't understand what was happening. The words she had spoken became the way of escape—like a ladder from the bottom of a pit. I thanked Jesus again.

What About the Others?

I thought of Pat, Bernie, and Mike. "What about the others?" I asked.

Jesus replied:

"All I could do was tell them."

I struggled. "But they'll think I've gone mad. I want to do more than tell them."

To answer me, the Lord took me back in time—to a moment weeks earlier at work. I had quoted Deuteronomy 28:53 to a receptionist:

"And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body..."
—Deuteronomy 28:53 (KJV)

She had recoiled in horror. I said, "I didn't say it—God did."

Jesus said to me:

"When I spoke to her through you, she shut her ears. That is all you can do—tell them. Their response is not your responsibility."

Grace thought I was talking to her. But before she could reply, Jesus had already answered me.

"Please Don't Leave Me"

When Jesus stopped speaking, I felt as though I were falling back into torment. I cried, "Please don't leave me."

He answered:

"I will never leave you."

Then He asked me:

"Why boast?"

I had often boasted to impress others. But now I saw the futility of it. I had nothing to boast of—and from that day, I have avoided boasting.

My torment ended at that moment. The rest of the night passed with many thoughts.

A New Day

The next day was Saturday. I was due at work but decided to take the day off. I phoned in and said I was not up to it.

That night, my life was changed forever.

CHAPTER 13
What After Salvation

A Changed Heart

Pat Jones had spent the night in the caravan parked at the side of the Knights' home, together with Paddy, who had nowhere else to live. We spent the day together, and I told them both of my experience. I assumed and expected them to fully understand and see what had happened.

Instinctively, things were different within me. An internal change had taken place, and by it, I had new desires. I no longer wished to live as I had lived and wanted to be rid of my bad ways. No one told me I had to give up any particular way of life—I found within me a desire to choose the good and refuse the evil.

Evidence of the New Birth

Upon reflection, I say this was evidence of the new birth, and I later found this experience spoken of by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John:

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
—John 3:3, KJV

The Apostle Paul also writes:

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
—2 Corinthians 5:17, KJV

But I also knew there was still a part of me that remained the same. As Paul expressed:

"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."
—Romans 7:21, KJV

Though this was my experience, I found it impossible to convey to my friends, even though I tried very hard.

What to Do with Stolen Goods

I had in my possession hundreds of pounds' worth of stolen property. I could no longer live off such things. But what should I do?

I had involved others in my crimes. Mike West came to see me the next day, and when he heard me say Jesus had spoken to me, he became afraid. I hadn't directly told him I wanted him to return the colour TV set I had stolen and exchanged for his Citroën car, but he was clearly concerned.

Poor Mike panicked, thinking I might go to the police. Some of the stolen goods—including a mini engine sub-chassis—had been stored in his garage. I asked Mike to dispose of them. I was later informed they had been dumped in the reservoir.

Back at the Club

That Saturday evening, Pat and I walked down to the Social Club at Park Street, our usual Saturday haunt. I intended to explain to my mates what had happened. I saw one or two people and shared my news, though I can't recall what I said. I had no desire to stay. I returned to the Knights' home, feeling strangely at a loose end. Pat Jones began to realise something had truly changed in me.

A Sunday Visit to Church

The next day, Sunday, Mrs Knight took Pat and me to the Southcourt Baptist Church in the evening. I distinctly remember the preacher's passage: from Exodus, where Israel was about to enter the Promised Land but feared the evil reports of ten spies, ignoring the two who encouraged faith and obedience. Whether the preacher mentioned it or not, I saw this as a picture of the body of Christ—the church of that day.

Southcourt Baptists

South Court Baptist Church

Seek to Tell Others

After the meeting, Mrs Knight introduced me to Martin White, who gave me a copy of the New Testament—Good News for Modern Man. I received it gratefully and began reading it daily.

In those early days, I lived in the afterglow and certainty of new life. I thirsted for knowledge—knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. I could not keep silent and told everyone at work about what had happened to me.

Evenings at Southcourt Baptist

My evenings were often spent at Mrs Knight's home, discussing Scripture with her Christian friends. Pat and Paddy seemed interested and listened.

My Ignorance of the Bible

Looking back, I'm amazed at my ignorance. Until that point, I had never read the Bible. I didn't even know what the Acts of the Apostles meant. Yet within two weeks, I had read the New Testament and thought I understood it all.

I soon learned, through Scripture, that in God's plan of salvation, it was the blood of Jesus Christ shed at Calvary that brought me full pardon for all my sins. I also learned that I had been freely given righteousness to justify me before God.

Jesus was a true substitute. He died for me—without cost to me. These were truths I drank in like water from the well of salvation. I learned them from the Bible, not even realising them on the night Jesus first spoke to me.

A Difference at College

When I returned to college that week, something had changed. I didn't dress to impress anymore. Previously, it would have been Levi jeans, white boots with red toe caps (or any colour I'd sprayed them), a Ben Sherman shirt, and a leather jerkin.

Now I dressed more soberly—best trousers from my Prince of Wales check suit, a shirt, pullover, and ordinary shoes. I told my friends, "Look, even my dress has changed." They couldn't believe it. I even told one of my lecturers, Mr Jones, but was met with a smile of wonder.

I Tell Rupert

That same week, I felt compelled to tell my friend Rupert, a West Indian from Jamaica. Pat Jones and I went to his room at 14 Bicester Road, Aylesbury. Rupert's response, in front of his girlfriend, was:

"I told you, Dave, not to take LSD."

They were none the wiser. Even though I tried to convince them, they could not believe.

Turning from the World

I could not continue in my former lifestyle. I had turned from the world I had built for myself—one full of self-glory, theft, boasting, adultery, fornication, drug use, drunkenness, violence, and ambition.

We all have our own worlds to forsake when we come to Christ. Some must leave behind religious traditions. A person may be born into a religious home, but still have a fallen nature—greed, pride, slander, backbiting—just as much as the non-religious man.

Any thought or act born out of selfishness is sin. Forsaking the world means forsaking those natural ways which are contrary to Christ.

Religious and Non-Religious Must Turn

Religious or not, all must turn from their world.

Whether one seeks fame, money, or lives in envy, all such sins must be forsaken. We are called to be in the world but not of it. This is what John Bunyan captured in The Pilgrim's Progress when he described the man turning his back on the City of Destruction.

Bunyan's tale mostly pictured the irreligious, but a religious man who is not born again has his own path of error. Such a man may think himself superior for not doing what others do, but we all must turn from our own world.

Kept by Grace

Now I had an inward and real desire to forsake those former ways. That doesn't mean I wasn't tempted. Part of me was still the same. But I desired to put to death sinful thoughts and actions.

If wrong affections arose, I felt self-condemned and abhorrence followed. I knew it displeased God. But by the grace of God, I was able to resist and fight against sin.

CHAPTER 14
What to Do with Stolen Goods

A Conscience Awakened

I was now moved by a new set of principles—but here lay a problem. I had erected a 48-foot by 12-foot wooden builder's shed on waste ground belonging to the Water Board, right next to the Knights' home at 24 Mount Street. This became my garage and workshop. The trouble was, the shed had been stolen from a building site in Berkhamsted.

I had persuaded Mr Knight to drive his lorry while Pat Jones, Paddy, and

I lifted the shed panels late one night.

Inside the Shed

Inside this shed was my newly acquired Citroën DS car, which had previously belonged to Mike West of Wendover. I had swapped it for a colour TV—stolen from Redlands, an old people's home in Winslow. The shed was full of valuable garage equipment, all stolen: a trailer, arc welder, trolley jack, air compressor, spray gun, speedboat engines—even a stolen car and various tools.

My Citroen DS

Except mine was banana yellow

What Could I Do Now?

Conscience would not allow me to continue using these things. But what should I do? Dispose of them all? How? I couldn't sell them—what would I do with the money? I couldn't use it. So much stolen property had passed through my hands that much of it couldn't even be recovered.

I had also just stolen a new Mini that I intended to use to build another car. I'd cut up the body in my parents' garage on Finmere Crescent, Aylesbury. While cutting it with an arc welder, the hydrolastic suspension fluid caught fire, nearly burning the garage to the ground.

The Stolen Mini

My Stolen Mini

There was also a Morris Minor Traveller, which I'd repurposed and used as a hire car after swapping plates and discarding the original body. Looking back, with the faith I have now, I believe I would have acted very differently.

Returning the Trolley Jack

During this time, I was able to return one item. One wet night in February 1972, Pat Jones and I loaded the trolley jack into my firm's van and drove to the garage near The Broad Leys pub on Wendover Road, from where I had stolen it.

The garage was closed. Quietly and swiftly, I placed the jack on the forecourt and drove off. I often wondered what the owner must have thought—months later, the stolen jack reappearing at his doorstep.

The Broad Leys

The Broad Lees Wendover Road

I had no real advisers. No one knew the full extent of the crimes I'd

committed or the volume of stolen goods in my possession. I faced a real moral dilemma. Whatever happened to me didn't matter—but I didn't want others dragged into it.

Mike West was afraid I'd go to the police. I had hoped he'd return the colour TV so I could give him the Citroën back, but he didn't. So I gave him the Citroën anyway—I could no longer justify using it.

Dealing with Sin and Temptation

No one needed to tell me what was right or wrong. I knew. Especially when it came to the sin of fornication—sexual activity outside marriage.

Temptation was fierce. By God's grace, I fought against it. I had to avoid meeting girls, knowing the danger it posed to both them and me. Jesus' words are clear:

"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

—Matthew 5:28, KJV

I agreed with Him. This was one of the hardest areas of struggle for any new believer—and especially for me.

Hippies in the Shed

Pat Jones began to bring new friends—hippies, who smoked pot, used drugs, and spent time pondering life. We invited them down to Mount Street, thinking it right to speak to them about Jesus Christ.

About five or six of them came—and they ended up sleeping in the shed. While I tried to share the gospel with them, I saw no real effect and felt disappointed. Perhaps one day I will see fruit.

I believed I was putting the shed to good use—housing the hippies. They stayed a few weeks and then moved on.

The Stolen Builders Shed on Water Board Ground

God's Intervention

One year later, God brought a solution—by intervention. It came with a knock on the door.

It was the C.I.D.. I was arrested for stealing the colour TV from Redlands old people's home in Winslow.

(SEE CHAPTER 1
Confession to 24 Crimes (The Court Case) FOR THE FULL ACCOUNT.)

CHAPTER 15
Going To Church

During the initial weeks following my conversion to Christ in February 1970, a series of meetings were held at Limes Avenue Baptist Church. The speaker was Mr Lance Pibworth, and a young woman named Geraldine Dunbar was being baptised.

Limes Avenue Baptist Church

Limes Avenue Baptist Church Aylesbury

It was here I witnessed my first baptism. Following the meeting, a man informed the congregation that anyone wishing to talk or ask questions could remain behind. On this occasion, I had brought Pat Jones and Paddy along. I wore my overalls and leather jacket, typical work attire—I was not dressed for church. I knew that God looketh not on the outward appearance, but man may do so, yet I was not concerned about our appearance.

I asked to speak with the minister, Mr Sibthorpe, and we were invited into his study. I explained my conversion and wanted him to confirm to Pat and Paddy that what I said was true. I half expected him to baptise me there and then, as I believed, according to Scripture, that ministers were under command to baptise believers upon faith. I was disappointed he did not instruct me to be baptised that night. At the time, I was unfamiliar with church membership, baptismal modes, doctrinal differences, or such matters—only that I should be baptised.

Soon after, I met Charley Tweedy, of the Church of Christ meeting at Stoke Mandeville Road (now a Seventh-Day Adventist Church). He claimed that without baptism one could not be saved. He held a responsible role in that church, so I shared my testimony with him, and he gave me his telephone

number. Despite disagreeing with his view on baptism, I felt compelled to call him—reasoning from his perspective, "I shall be damned if I die today unbaptised." I wanted to assure him that was not so. When I phoned, he seemed indifferent and unconcerned, which again left me disappointed.

I Attend Various Churches

At that point, I was not attached to any church but attended a Sunday night meeting with Mrs Knight at the Assemblies of God Pentecostal Church, Rickford's Hill, where Pastor Baker ministered. They welcomed me warmly without question. It was here I met Cyril Bryan and Barry Crown.

Giving a Testimony

On one occasion, I was asked to share a testimony of the Lord's dealings with me that week. I stood before the congregation in my work clothes, unaware of any distinction between weekday attire and Sabbath dress, and shared how I had resisted the devil's temptation to steal a car battery.

My own car battery had failed. Passing Adam's Garage on Tring Road, I saw batteries behind a fence and was tempted—this would once have led me to steal. But I recognised this thought as the "old man" and resisted, rebuking Satan and telling him to go away—in plain words: "Bugger off, Satan." Unaware this was considered bad language, I later learned Cyril Bryan gently reproved me. At the time, I neither recognised the reproof nor the impropriety of the words.

Church of God near Stoke Mandeville

The Church of God, Mandeville Road Aylesbury

I Am Baptised

From Scripture, I knew I ought to be baptised. I expected Pastor Baker

of the Assemblies of God to instruct me to be baptised, as Christ had commanded. Baptism symbolised the new birth, which I had experienced, signifying union with Christ in death and resurrection. Still, no one spoke to me about baptism.

Rickford's Hill Assemblies of God

Assemblies of God Church Building

Not long after the Limes Avenue meetings, I was introduced to a group of West Indian Christians meeting in a shed on Fleet Street. Pastor Bruce of Luton led them, and they too were holding meetings leading to baptism. Learning they had permission to use Limes Avenue's baptistry, I asked Pastor Bruce to baptise me. He agreed and asked me to attend baptism classes. I presumed these classes ensured candidates understood baptism. I was not told that I was expected to join their church afterwards.

Fleet Street Pentecostal

Fleet Street Pentecostal Meeting Hall

I was baptised early one Sunday morning at 7:00 a.m. at Limes Avenue

Baptist Church. Friends who attended included Pat Jones, Paddy, Paul Brooks, Mrs Knight, and Mrs Chapski. Pastor Bruce baptised me in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in obedience to our Lord's command (Matthew 28:19).

Some later claimed that baptism was only valid if performed "in Jesus' name" alone, reasoning that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all named Jesus. Gordon Smith of Albert Street told me some believed all other baptisms were invalid unless re-administered in Jesus' name. I found this reasoning unconvincing, especially since Jesus commanded baptism in the triune name.

Mormons and Baptism

Around this time, two Mormons confronted me at my home in Finmere Crescent, insisting my baptism was invalid as the one who performed it lacked authority. I knew they were wrong, having read the Scriptures and understood the meaning of baptism. I later encountered similar views among some Primitive Baptists in the Philippines. Yet again, they erred.

As far as I could discern, a man could be dipped, ducked, drenched, soaked, or sprinkled with ten thousand gallons of water, yet it would not alter his spiritual state. Baptism cannot produce the new birth, remove sin, or regenerate a man—only the Spirit proceeding from the Father and sent by the Son can do that (John 15:26). The new birth is not of the will of the flesh nor of man, but of God (John 1:13). Baptism cannot save.

Baptism in the Spirit

I discovered few churches in Aylesbury believed the baptism in the Holy Spirit was distinct from being born again. I accepted this teaching, for I saw it in Scripture. I believed I was baptised in the Spirit upon believing, when Christ spoke to me. The only thing lacking was the gift of tongues, which had not manifested.

When I spoke to Mr Sibthorpe of Limes Avenue Strict Baptist Church, he gave me an article by John Stott that denied this view. I was shocked by how they evaded what Scripture plainly taught.

I read extensively on the subject. The best book at that time was Derek Prince's From Jordan to Pentecost, which gave a clear biblical account affirming speaking in tongues as evidence of Spirit baptism, as in apostolic

times.

The Christian Life

Conversion to Christ was not a matter of outward rules or imposed commandments. I was not bound by legalism or performance. The rule was faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

I became a "new man" with a genuine desire to follow Christ. Scripture describes this as God writing His laws upon the heart (Hebrews 8:10–13). I began reading the Bible straightaway. I finished the Good News Bible in two weeks, which was good for someone who had barely been able to read. I believed I understood most of it, perhaps all at the time.

The Divine Nature of Jesus Christ

Before this, I had been ignorant. Soon, the core gospel truths became clear: the deity of Christ; the reality of Hell and Heaven; the historicity of Adam and Eve and the Fall; the necessity of Christ's shed blood for sin; that salvation was by faith alone, apart from works. We were not under the Law of Moses, but under Christ's rule—governed by the gospel of grace.

I once told a friend, "I didn't have to give up anything to become a Christian." I meant that I no longer wanted to do certain things—it wasn't difficult. Later, he publicly asked me if that meant you didn't have to give anything up to be a Christian. Expecting me to say yes, I replied, "That's right—you don't have to give up anything, except sin." That silenced him. The point was made.

Preaching, Not Entertainment

I learned that God saves by the preaching of Christ crucified. The new birth is essential. I was surprised by the apathy of some professing believers, and how many preferred music and entertainment to preaching.

Giving My Testimony

On 22 May 1972, I was asked to give my testimony before an audience of about 400 in Luton. I didn't know the purpose of the meeting, so I simply shared the gospel as best I could. Though I was not well-versed in the doctrines of grace at the time, I was soon to be taught more perfectly. That meeting was providentially recorded:

(Click here) **Converted on LSD Trip 1972 David Clarke**

Every Day the Sabbath Day

To me, every day belonged to the Lord. I awoke conscious of His presence and slept under His care. I observed no holy days or Sabbaths—for I knew these were fulfilled in Christ. He is the substance; the Sabbath was but a shadow (Colossians 2:16–17).

Authorized Version of the Bible

At the Assemblies of God Church, a representative from the Trinitarian Bible Society, Mr Cyril Bryan, spoke. He emphasised the importance of a faithful translation, warning that modern versions altered texts upholding Christ's deity. From then on, I favoured the Authorised Version, especially as the books I read quoted from it.

Giving Money

At a Fleet Street Pentecostal meeting, there was a moving appeal to support young musicians. I gave all I had—about £200—feeling it was for the Lord's work. Shortly afterwards, the steward returned to ask if I knew how much I'd given. I said yes—it was fine.

Later, an evangelist named C. D. Gilbert visited. He prayed over my tattoo, saying God could remove it miraculously. He also made prophetic appeals for money, claiming God had told him everyone must withdraw 10% of their funds and donate the next day—or face an accident. He warned that someone in the audience doubted God and must come forward—or else. I knew he meant me. But I also knew his words were not of God.

I reported the matter to Mr Eric Connett, a preacher there, hoping he would act. I write this for the benefit of others who may feel pressured by those who speak in the name of the Lord. Not all who say "Lord, Lord" are of God.

God loveth a cheerful giver. He does not need our money but seeks our hearts. When He has our hearts, all else follows. Just as there is no longer a Sabbath day but a Sabbath life, so with giving—there is no 10% tithe. All belongs to the Lord.

Doing the Work of an Evangelist

I found myself naturally preaching about Christ. One Sunday, while repairing a car on Mount Street, I saw several street children I knew. Dressed in my overalls and leather jacket, I invited them to church. We went

to Granville Street Evangelical (formerly Brethren). Aware of our untidy appearance, I recalled the Scripture about taking the lowest seat. We quietly entered mid-meeting and sat on the floor. The congregation stared, and a man eventually invited us to sit on chairs toward the front.

Granville Street Evangelical Church, Aylesbury

Later in the service, they held the "breaking of bread." Being an open communion church, they permitted all believers to partake. But when the bread and cup reached our row, they were passed by. We had been judged outwardly, not as God judges. Apparently, I did not dress like a Christian.

Granville Street former Brethren Church

Granville Street Evangelical

I Meet Peter Howe, Minister of the Gospel

Around this time, I met Mr Peter Howe, former pastor at Herne Bay Evangelical Church, who befriended Paul and Sue Aston. Paul was a Bible student at Watford. Soon after, Mr Howe became pastor at Ivanhoe Particular Baptist Church, which Paul and his wife joined.

I Was a Hyper-Calvinist

Mr Howe opposed what he called Hyper-Calvinism, which he said characterised Gospel Standard Baptists. We could make little headway, as he was convinced of his view. He mocked the term "Dead Elect"—referring to the elect before conversion. I accepted the term, having heard Mr Hill from Luton use it.

Doctrinal Summary

By then, I held a fairly comprehensive grasp of gospel doctrine. I believed in:

The sovereignty of God

The deity and eternal Sonship of Christ

The accuracy of the Authorised Version

The eternal purposes of the Triune God

Predestination and election

Justification by imputed righteousness

The new birth

These truths enabled me to discern the many errors of professing believers. I was shocked at their ignorance.

I Hear Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones Preach

I was encouraged to visit various churches. At Long Crendon, I attended an anniversary service with a guest preacher—Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

Long Crendon Evangelical Church

Dr Lloyd-Jones had a remarkable gift for preaching. He clearly understood doctrine, though he never publicly affirmed absolute predestination, though I believe he knew it. I later heard him again at Ivanhoe Particular Baptist Church, where Peter Howe had become pastor and where Mr and Mrs Dix, and Paul Aston and wife, were members.

Long Crendon Evangelical Church

Long Crendon Evangelical Church

CHAPTER 16
Getting A Job

This presented a difficulty to me, but I believed in God, and I believed that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I would be provided for.

I had been dismissed from Radio Rentals due to my confession of stealing one of their colour televisions from the old people's home in Winslow. All I knew was how to repair televisions, and I held a City and Guilds 111 qualification. I resolved to accept the first job offered to me through the Labour Exchange, which was with a firm called Electroloid in Aylesbury. I was employed as a wireman, and during the interview, the foreman, named Dennis, asked why I had left my previous position. Determined to be honest, I told him I had been dismissed for theft. He asked no further questions and gave me the job. I also negotiated to have one day off a week, unpaid, in order to complete my college course.

I quickly gained a good understanding of the equipment I was wiring and began reading circuit diagrams. My knowledge developed to the point where I could fault-find and even work on the development of test equipment.

Electroloid was a company that manufactured equipment for electroplating. I was specifically involved in assembling the controllers used in the automatic dipping of parts requiring plating. Today, a microprocessor would replace the entire control unit.

Soon, I was sent out on site to trace faults in installed equipment. After six months, I was tasked with commissioning a controller in Southend. This meant doing whatever was necessary to get the equipment operational. I spent a week away from home and successfully completed the task, even drawing diagrams for the owner to help him resolve future issues. He was so pleased that he invited me to apply for the role of maintenance engineer. However, I declined, as I was not yet ready to leave Aylesbury, having recently found Christian fellowship. In hindsight, I perhaps should have taken the job, as I now realise that Christians are found all over, not just in Aylesbury.

Acting Foolishly

When not troubleshooting, I grew bored and impatient, which led me to act unwisely. I began experimenting with charging lead-acid car batteries and observing the gasses emitted when charged at high rates.

One tea break, I decided to collect the hydrogen gas in a very large plastic bag—large enough to cover an overcoat. I charged the battery at 50 A/H, and soon the bag was full. Curious to see what would happen if it ignited, I devised a method. I took two match heads, wrapped them with thin wire, and connected this to two long pieces of insulated wire. Hiding behind a large metal cabinet, I connected the wires to the car battery, thus creating a detonator.

The explosion was so loud that the entire building shook, and the factory ground to a halt. The foreman came to investigate. Embarrassed, I emerged from behind the cabinet like a chastened dog. The manager, named Tom, asked what had happened. Before he even spoke, my conscience convicted me. I felt like a fool and knew I had dishonoured the Lord Jesus. I simply said the hydrogen from the battery had ignited but that all was now well. I explained everything to my colleagues upon their return from break. Though I laughed it off, inwardly I felt ashamed—I had acted foolishly and let Jesus down. Boredom, pride, and self-interest became snares to me, and I began to joke and mess around at work, which left me feeling defiled.

Working for Self

After some time at Electroloid, I became dissatisfied with the repetitive work. Though new opportunities were arising, I failed to recognise or embrace them, especially as they might involve travel and time away from my Christian friends.

At that time, my brother was unemployed, and Jock Macallion, who was replacing windows on a council estate in Rickmansworth, offered us work. Hastily, I handed in my notice, and my brother and I resumed working together. That job, however, soon came to an end. We then found work on a building site as carpenters, earning £10 a day—a good wage at the time—which lasted for several weeks. One day on site, the men laughed when I spoke about the Lord Jesus Christ. It didn't bother me, but for the first time ever, my brother defended me, affirming that what I said was true.

Delivered from Fire – Morgan Sports Car

Afterwards, we decided to earn money through welding and spraying cars. I had the tools and knowledge, so we hired a barn in Little Horwood and started a business. It was January and cold, so we used an oil-burning stove for heating, nicknamed "Sally the Oil-Burning Goose" due to the shape of the chimney. Although it was designed to use heating oil or paraffin, we used old engine oil, which proved hazardous.

One day, I was preparing a Morgan sports car, worth £1,000 (1972), for respraying. "Sally" was burning away, but she began bubbling and spitting—an indication that water was in the oil. Normally we'd shut her down and restart her, but she was too hot. Suddenly, she erupted, releasing gallons of hot engine oil, which ignited and spread across the floor.

The flames leapt up, burning the polythene ceiling across the rafters. The smoke and heat were terrifying. Alone in a wooden barn in the middle of a field, with a valuable car inside and the building about to go up in flames, I cried out aloud to God. I had done all I could—now I sought divine help.

As I turned to leave the barn, I saw a large, damp tarpaulin. I unfolded it and used it as a fire blanket. Entering the barn again, I threw it over the burning oil. The flames were extinguished. Though they reappeared a few times, I managed to put them out. God had answered my prayer. He gave me wisdom, courage, and initiative to apply a natural solution to the crisis. Praise God!

About fifteen minutes later, Mike West, his wife, and the Knights arrived to visit. They said I looked as white as a sheet. No wonder! I told them everything. Mr Knight later enquired about insurance, but the company refused cover, deeming it too risky. Shortly after, I decided I would have to find a different kind of work.

I Find Work in Lowestoft

In the spring of 1972, I saw a job advertised in a national paper for a faultfinder at the Pye TV factory in Fleet, Lowestoft. I took the job and moved into a YMCA hostel, leaving Aylesbury and my parents' home. Around the same time, KK also took a job at the factory, and he and his wife moved to Lowestoft briefly but later decided not to stay.

The Elim Pentecostal Church

I felt very lonely but soon got involved with the Elim Pentecostal Church in town. At the local Christian bookshop, I ordered The Sovereignty of God by Arthur Pink. The mother of one of the girls served me in the shop, and it quickly became known among the young people that I was a Calvinist.

One evening at the youth meeting, the girl (about 20 years old) asked if I was a Calvinist. I replied, "Yes, I believe in the sovereignty of God." She was the daughter of a senior church member. Her response was, "YUK!" and she walked away. I certainly felt her hostility.

I later decided to speak with the church elders about what I had been learning. However, the doctrine that God chooses some and not others was not well received. They also rejected the teaching of Particular Redemption.

While staying at the YMCA, I often woke up with a bad taste in my mouth—it "tasted like the inside of a zookeeper's boot," as Mike West would say. Feeling low, I began taking Andrews Liver Salts, which I initially found refreshing. However, I took them too frequently and eventually experienced severe stomach pains, especially after eating salad. This led to months of discomfort and eventually a diagnosis of duodenal ulcers.

I Speak at the Factory

I recall witnessing to one of the factory workers about Jesus Christ. I explained that all have sinned and come short of God's standard. He disagreed, claiming he had lived a good life and enjoyed football. When he asked what was wrong with attending football matches, I hastily quoted, "Go not with a crowd to do evil," thinking of football hooliganism. He dismissed my comment as ridiculous.

That summer, I returned to Aylesbury and applied for a job as a television service engineer in Tring with Mr C. J. Ward & Son. I was offered the job and thus left the Pye factory in Lowestoft.

CHAPTER 17

Pentecostal Holiness – Bierton

Upon my return to Aylesbury in the summer of 1972, I attended the opening services of the newly established Pentecostal Holiness Church in Bierton, Buckinghamshire. The preacher for the occasion was the Reverend Gordon Hills, who was also the pastor of an Elim Pentecostal Church in High Wycombe.

Pentecostal Holiness Church Bierton

Pentecostal Holiness Church Bierton

Five Points of Calvinism

There was a week-long series of meetings, and I soon realised that he too was a Calvinist. Each evening, his preaching centred on one of the five points of Calvinism: Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Perseverance of the Saints. I was greatly encouraged and assumed that Mr Harrison, the minister of the Bierton Pentecostal Holiness Church, was likewise in agreement with these truths. At last, I felt I had found a fellowship where both sound doctrine and the baptism of the Spirit were embraced. I was greatly uplifted.

I began attending regularly and became involved in the youth work. Before long, we had more children from the streets than we could manage. I was completely out of my depth when it came to discipline and guidance. It was a tremendous opportunity, but neither I nor anyone else knew how to handle it effectively, so the youth ministry was sadly closed.

Working for Mr C. J. Ward & Son

During the summer holidays, when the Pye factory in Lowestoft shut

down, I sought work closer to home and applied for a position with C. J. Ward & Son in Tring. At the interview, Mr Ward, the proprietor, said I had secured the job simply because I had arrived exactly on time. I hadn't planned it that way—I just happened to arrive at the precise hour. I began work on 14th August 1972, with a salary of £2,000 per annum. I thanked God sincerely for His mercies.

City and Guilds London Institute Award

While employed at C. J. Ward & Son, I completed my studies at Luton College of Technology and was awarded a Final Certificate in Radio and Television Servicing, including a Colour Television Endorsement—Course 48, the highest qualification in the field. This would prove very useful in time to come.

However, none of the staff at C. J. Ward had any time or interest in Christian matters. I felt treated with contempt, especially when I mentioned that the Bible refers to the "synagogue of Satan." I was not the only one who suffered ridicule—the apprentice was often treated like a servant and humiliated, which he greatly resented.

Dr Gill's Doctrinal Divinity

Lunch breaks lasted from one to two o'clock, during which the other staff went home. I remained in the workshop and used this time to read Scripture and various theological works. Truly, I could say, "I esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12).

I read Mercies of a Covenant God by John Kershaw, the life of John Warburton, Martin Luther's Bondage of the Will, William Huntington's The Kingdom of Heaven Taken by Prayer, and J. C. Philpot's The Eternal Sonship of Christ and sermon, Winter Before Harvest.

Most valuable of all was Dr John Gill's Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity, recommended by my friend Peter Murray. These writings deepened my understanding of the doctrines of grace, and they became my theological education for many years. I also worked through Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, noting unfamiliar words on several pages of full-sized paper. This marked a great leap from reading comics and James Bond paperbacks.

Michael Goes to Spain

Around this time, my brother Michael decided to move to Spain. He sold his home in Brackley and purchased an eight-metre Bobcat catamaran, in which he lived in Denia, enjoying the Mediterranean climate. However, disaster soon struck—a hurricane battered the harbour, and his boat was dashed upon the rocks, damaging one of the hulls.

Bobcat Catamaran

Michael's 8 Metre Bobcat Catamaran

Before the storm, Michael had invited our parents and me for a two-week holiday. After the hurricane subsided, the catamaran was lifted from the water by crane for repairs. My parents arrived and were accommodated on a friend's boat. Michael collected me from Alicante Airport. I spent my holiday assisting in the repairs. I brought with me Luther's Bondage of the Will, translated from German by Erasmus Middleton.

I Leave the Pentecostal Holiness Church

At this time, I had become unsettled within the Pentecostal Church over several issues I struggled to reconcile. When I explained to Mr Harrison, the minister, that I wished to leave because the church did not uphold the doctrines of grace, he responded that such differences were minor and no reason to depart. I found this reasoning troubling and disagreed.

A Denial of Imputed Righteousness

One serious concern involved Mr E. C. Connet, a teacher in the church, who did not believe or teach that the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ was imputed to us for our justification. Though he had previously helped me, I could not overlook this denial.

Mr Harrison claimed to believe in total depravity (though he did not use that term), yet he stated that there must have been some small amount of good in us for God to love and save us. I knew otherwise. God sets His love upon us not because we are lovable, but because He wills it—according to His mercy and eternal purpose. As it is written, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4).

Scripture Should Guide, Not Feelings

I also became uncomfortable with the tendency to be led by feelings rather than by the Word of God. For instance, Mr Harrison once told the church that the Lord had shown him which bungalow to buy in Windermere Close, Aylesbury. He knew it was God's will, he said, because the sellers accepted his reduced offer immediately. Later, he claimed the Lord did not want him to buy it, as there were 17 unfavourable clauses in the contract.

To me, this was no evidence of divine leading. I believed the Lord neither told him to purchase the bungalow nor to refrain. Such practices, led by feelings rather than Scripture, opened the door to deception.

Arminian Righteousness

Mr Connet, whom I still respected, once told me it was doctrinally incorrect to say the righteousness of Christ was imputed to us for justification. He insisted that each individual needed their own righteousness, and that Christ's righteousness was only for Himself. I was stunned.

On every occasion, I tried to reason with him from Scripture. I pointed out that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22). Just as Adam's guilt was imputed to us, so Christ's righteousness is imputed to believers. I maintained that only on this ground do we stand justified before God.

One Sunday morning, Mr Connet turned on me angrily and said I spoke only of doctrine and never of the Lord. I was deeply wounded, for I had looked to him for guidance and support. I groaned in spirit, unsure of how to respond. It was these doctrinal differences that ultimately led me to leave the Pentecostal Holiness Church at Bierton.

I Am Made Redundant

In 1973, during the economic crisis and the government's imposition of the three-day working week, C. J. Ward & Son suffered financially. On

8th February 1974, I received a letter informing me of my redundancy. The timing of this letter held great significance for me.

When I realised I was now unemployed, I noted the date—precisely three years to the day since Judge Col. Tetley at Aylesbury Magistrates' Court had given me a conditional discharge for my past offences. That discharge, granted on 9th February 1971, lasted three years. Now, on 8th February 1974, I was free from legal condemnation and under no obligation to disclose my criminal record—unless asked.

It was as though my heavenly Father were saying, "Fear not. I will provide." I felt free to seek new employment with a clear conscience.

Letter of Redundancy

From: C. J. Ward & Son – 8th February 1974To: Mr D. Clarke, 37 Finmere Crescent, Aylesbury

Dear David,

It is with deep regret that, due to the present economic situation, we must terminate your employment one week from today.

Please rest assured this decision is no reflection on your work or your recent illness. I will be more than happy to provide any reference that may assist you. Should circumstances improve, I would gladly consider any future application you may submit and remain happy to help in any way.

Yours sincerely,C. J. Ward(Enclosed: P45 and National Insurance Card)

Note: We have submitted your National Health certificate and have not deducted any funds from next week's pay.

Reference Provided

To whom it may concern,

Mr David Clarke has been in our employ since August 1972 and has always proven himself industrious, courteous, efficient, and reliable. While with us, he attended day college and successfully gained his City and Guilds endorsement, adding to his previous qualifications. We thoroughly recommend him for any similar position and wish him every success.

It is only due to the country's unrest and current economic difficulties that we must, with great regret, dispense with his services.

C. J. Ward

CHAPTER 18
Working For Granada Tv Rentals

Within two weeks of my redundancy, I secured a new job working as a service technician for Granada TV Rentals. I began my employment with Granada TV Ltd. on 25th February 1974, earning £37.27 per week. The company car bore the firm's logo, clearly identifying my employer—a detail that would later become significant. I was also granted a weekly vehicle allowance of £3.72.

I Am Promoted to Service Manager

Within six months, I was promoted to Workshop Manager. I found the work both challenging and rewarding, and working for Granada was a breath of fresh air. I got on well with everyone. However, I worked too hard and was inefficient in managing my energy, which eventually led to a serious bout of depression—a matter I shall recount later.

Granada TV Rentals Aylesbury

Michael Nicholson, David. Phil Reason, Tony Burnham Mrs Royce-Taylor

My Visit to Northern Ireland

In July 1974, I was encouraged to take a break from work and accepted an invitation from Owen McCrystal to visit his home in Omagh, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland. Owen owned a business called "Crystal T.V.", which he had started by bringing a vanload of second-hand televisions from England to Omagh. He began renting them out and repairing both washing machines and televisions.

I was invited to instruct one of his employees, Ivan, on the workings of colour televisions. Owen claimed to be a genius, arguing that he could repair TVs without understanding how they functioned. According to him, if one needed to understand how something worked in order to fix it, they were no genius.

Owen's wife was a Roman Catholic, and I suspect they viewed my evangelical beliefs with some scepticism. At the time, I was completely unaware of the deep-seated conflicts in Northern Ireland. I had heard people criticise the Rev. Ian Paisley, but all I knew of him was his sermon "Second Mile Religion", which convinced me he was a man of God who preached the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ.

I Seek Ian Paisley

On my journey through Belfast, I decided to stop overnight and attend Martyrs Memorial Church, where Ian Paisley was the minister. I arrived on 12th July 1974, unaware of the significance of the date.

The city was on high alert. Soldiers patrolled the streets with rifles, and most shops and doorways were shuttered. That evening, after much marching and celebration had taken place, I knocked on the door of a guest house run by two women. I explained I was an Englishman who had come to hear Ian Paisley preach. They looked at me with astonishment and asked what an Englishman was doing in Belfast during such troubled times.

They identified themselves as Catholics and said they would be too afraid to attend one of Ian Paisley's meetings, though they admitted they'd like to. Despite their initial concern, they made me welcome, and I spent a pleasant evening learning more about the situation in Northern Ireland.

The Wrong Part of Belfast

The following morning, I walked through Belfast with my suitcase in

hand, looking for the church. I asked a milkman for directions to Martyrs Memorial Church, and he warned me I was in the wrong part of Belfast to be asking such questions. I soon realised I must have been in a Catholic area.

In a newspaper shop, I noticed a postcard featuring a man named "Carson." Out of curiosity, I asked the shopkeeper who he was. She replied scathingly, saying I ought not to be asking such questions, confirming that I was indeed in the wrong place.

Eventually, I arrived at Martyrs Memorial Church. It was a large building adorned with figures of Protestant martyrs. Dr Paisley preached boldly and faithfully the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Contrary to what I had heard, there was no mention of politics—only the message of salvation. I concluded that people objected not to his message but perhaps to his manner of delivery, which I imagined to be as sharp as a "bastard file."

After the service, I spoke with Dr Paisley and asked for help in getting to Omagh. I eventually secured transport and joined a group from the Free Presbyterian Church there. I was even given an orange sash and took part in a local march through Omagh. Later, we attended a meeting preached by the Reverend William McCrea.

Owen and his family were kind hosts. Though Owen did not profess belief in the Gospel and remained a nominal Catholic, we had many discussions about the things of God. Ivan confided in me that he was a Christian but kept quiet at work so as not to provoke Owen's displeasure.

Life in Omagh was noticeably slower-paced than in Aylesbury. Everyone seemed familiar with terms like "born again" or "saved"—even Owen and his wife. This was quite unlike the spiritual climate in England.

Rev. Ian Paisley

Isaac And Esther Crying Their Eyes Out

We Go to the Reformation Conference

Some years later, on 14th May 1983, my wife and I attended a Reformation Conference in London to hear Dr Ian Paisley preach once again. We brought our two children, Isaac and Esther, who both sat on Dr Paisley's knee and wept. A photograph captured the moment—Dr Paisley later remarked that they were tears of repentance.

Dr Ian Paisley Preaches At Hounslow (click to view)

We Employ Michael Nicholson

Upon returning from my holiday, a technician vacancy opened at Granada. As Workshop Manager, I contacted Michael Nicholson, who had been an apprentice at C. J. Ward. He had previously expressed dissatisfaction with his role there and a desire to leave.

He successfully passed the necessary tests and joined Granada as a technician in October 1974.

I Am Poached by C. J. Ward & Son

Later that month, I received a call from Mr C. J. Ward, offering me a job. I attended the interview and asked many questions, explaining my concerns about my Christian faith and the three-year conditional discharge I had received. Mr Ward appeared sympathetic and even expressed regret for not knowing sooner. I told him about my conversion and testimony.

He offered me £50 per week—£10 more than I was earning at Granada—plus a company car and a day off. I was tempted. When he increased the offer to £60 and asked me to start immediately, foregoing my notice period, I agreed.

Initially, I thanked God for this promotion and Mr Ward seemed quite pleased. However, after prayer and reflection, I questioned whether it was right to leave Granada so abruptly, especially considering the kindness of my boss, Tony Burnham, who had supported me. I ultimately declined the offer and informed Mr Ward of my decision.

Letter from Mr Ward

Mr Ward was displeased, and his letter reflected his disappointment:

Dear David,

I have to thank you for your letter dated 8th October. I have personally not written before as I have been trying to reconcile your actions with your religious beliefs, to this "God which spoke to you".

You spent all one Friday afternoon asking about four pages of questions. I began to think it was myself asking for a job, which apparently were answered to your satisfaction. You agreed to take the position at a wage well above your actual capabilities, but I was willing to accept. Capabilities which in part we paid for you to acquire. You shook hands with me to seal the bargain, and when I asked if you required a contract, you paid me the compliment of saying, "No, your word is good enough, Mr Ward." What a pity I cannot now pay the same compliment to you, as within 24 hours you had broken our agreement.

One does not expect this from religious people of conviction. Your religion is obviously different to mine. Just how is this compatible with

seducing our apprentice away from us before he had completed his contract, which he so willingly and at his own request signed for?

Yours sincerely,C. J. Ward

My Reply to Mr Ward

Feeling that Mr Ward was acting in spite, I responded as follows:

Dear Mr Ward,

I am sorry to hear you seem so bitter about my breaking our agreement. I initially wrote to apologise for inconveniencing you and wasting your time and money. My conscience troubled me over accepting and then rejecting your offer. Please accept my sincere apology.

You asked for an immediate decision, which required me to weigh everything carefully. You acted in your own interest when you previously dismissed me. Likewise, I had to act in mine.

I remain grateful for the training you funded. But I never intended to leave—you dismissed me. Thus, I feel under no obligation in that regard.

As for Michael, I did not encourage him to break his contract. He told me he planned to leave once his apprenticeship ended. I believed it already had. I advised him to make his own decision.

Regarding seduction, I would note that you asked me to leave Granada without serving notice. On that point, it seems we are indeed different.

My Lord and God, whom you refer to, is your Creator also. Both you and I are accountable to Him. If He works in me, a sinful man, and you speak against it, it is not I you defy, but God.

I do not enjoy upsetting people. I hope you will accept this letter in good faith. I admire your business abilities and wish to remain on good terms.

Yours sincerely,David Clarke

Victor Prince and the Crombie Overcoat

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:6)

The following is from my personal diary and demonstrates the remarkable leading of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.

On Friday, 30th August 1974, during my day off, I was working on rebuilding our garage roof at 37 Finmere Crescent, Aylesbury. As I worked, I reflected on how personally God deals with His children. Each has a unique testimony and experience of God's grace.

This led me to recall a man named Mr Victor Prince, a tailor I had wronged years earlier. After leaving Borstal, I commissioned him to make a Crombie overcoat for £45, leaving a £5 deposit. At that time, I was living in London on a government training course.

When my brother visited on home leave, he persuaded me to reject the coat, arguing it was taking too long. We confronted Mr Prince, picking fault with the coat and refusing to take it. Our behaviour was unkind. Mr Prince offered to keep the coat until I could pay, but I left it with him and never looked back—until that day on the roof.

Contemplation on Divine Predestination

As I pondered predestination, I marvelled that God had planned all things to display His glory and grace in Christ. Salvation was not the result of free will, but of God's free grace. I resolved to repay Mr Prince and apologise if I ever saw him again.

Exactly one week later, on Sunday, 8th September 1974, Mrs Knight from Mount Street mentioned she and her husband had run into someone they hadn't seen in years. Before she could continue, I said, "It's Mr Prince." She was amazed. They had indeed met Mr Prince, whose television had stopped working. They mentioned me, and he remembered me well. He left it to them to arrange for me to repair the TV.

This was no coincidence. God had done it.

The following Sunday, we visited Mr Prince, but he was attending a harvest thanksgiving at a Methodist church. We arranged to return on

18th September. I was deeply embarrassed but repaired his television and apologised. I also offered to repay what I owed, forgetting entirely about the coat.

To my astonishment, he still had it—even after several house moves. The amount outstanding was £38, but he accepted £34, which I paid by cheque (No. 183901). The dark blue Crombie overcoat is still in my possession to this day.

CHAPTER19
Bierton Strict And Particular Baptists

I felt led of the Lord and rightly convicted to leave the Pentecostal Church and attend the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church. Though I retained a deep affection for the brethren at the former church, my conscience could no longer allow me to remain there when, across the road, was a company professing and upholding the very truths of the Gospel I had come to receive and cherish. Thus, I began attending Bierton as a member of the congregation, drawn by what I believed to be a true cause of truth.

Bierton Baptist Chapel

Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Chapel. The Church was founded in 1831

Distinguishing Doctrines of Grace

A friend from Wendover, Mr Alan Benning, informed me that Bierton held to the doctrines of grace and that a Mr J. Hill, a Gospel Standard minister from Ebenezer Chapel, Luton, was scheduled to preach at an upcoming anniversary service. Eager to hear such preaching, I began to attend their

Wednesday night prayer meetings.

My heart was stirred with hope, anticipating the faithful declaration of God's free and sovereign grace, especially as Mr Hill was associated with the Gospel Standard. I had become acquainted with the writings and autobiographies of men such as William Huntington, William Gadsby, and John Kershaw, and found their testimonies full of Christ, giving glory to God and not to man. These had been great helps during my time at C. J. Ward & Son.

I began attending just prior to Mr Hill's anniversary sermon. At that stage, I was unfamiliar with the manner of service, church order, or which ministers would typically be engaged on the Lord's Day.

Denham's Hymns

The congregation at Bierton used The Saint's Melody, a collection by Denham, and I found the substance of these hymns rich and edifying. The pace of singing was much slower than I had experienced in other churches, yet the reverence in worship was unmistakable. Miss Bertha Ellis would play the organ with foot pedals, and the services followed a simple structure: hymn, Scripture reading (Authorised Version), hymn, prayer, hymn, sermon, closing hymn, and final prayer.

After a short time, Mr King asked if I would be willing to lead in prayer. As was custom, only men were invited to pray aloud. I agreed and did so, but afterwards, Mr King gently requested that I adopt more reverent language when addressing God—using "Thee" and "Thou" instead of "You" and "Your," as it was the congregation's custom and helped maintain a sense of reverence. Initially, I felt somewhat offended and questioned the significance of such phrasing. However, in humility, I submitted to their practice, desiring not to be a stumbling block. To this day, I still find myself using that form of address in prayer.

The Doctrines of the Gospel

I was fully persuaded of the infallibility of Scripture as the only rule of faith and practice. I believed the Bible taught one true and sovereign God, self-existent and eternal, subsisting in three divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. These were not three gods but one God, each Person co-equal and co-eternal, possessing the whole of the divine essence.

I believed Jesus Christ to be the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth—the sole Saviour of God's elect. Though one Person, He possessed two natures: truly God from all eternity and, through the incarnation, truly man. Thus, He was the glorious Mediator foretold, come to save His people from their sins. During His humiliation, His divine glory was veiled.

This Jesus Had Called Me

It was this same Jesus who had called me by His grace and revealed Himself to me personally, outside of any church influence. When I heard Mr Hill preach at the anniversary service, he clearly declared the distinguishing doctrines of grace. At that time, I was not familiar with many preachers who did so. I had heard Dr Ian Paisley preach "Second Mile Religion" on record and had also heard Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, though the latter seemed not to emphasise these doctrines as clearly.

The churches I had formerly attended in and around Aylesbury largely espoused Arminianism, teaching universal love and a general atonement—teachings contrary to the doctrine of particular redemption.

Not All Preaching Was Good

Not all the preaching at Bierton was of equal value. We had many visiting ministers, and some sermons were difficult to endure. Many were not Gospel Standard ministers and some even opposed that position, instead referencing the 1689 Confession, which I came to see as flawed. Others hailed the 1646 Westminster Confession as superior, but I found that, too, to be in error.

Some preachers used notes; others did not. This made little difference in some cases, as I thought certain ministers would have benefited from a prepared message. Some spoke spontaneously, claiming to be led by the Spirit, but even that was no guarantee of sound preaching.

Miss Ruth Ellis

A dear member of our church, Miss Ruth Ellis, was a spiritual gem. She loved to share hymns and accounts of Christian experience. Midweek visits to her home were always edifying. Sadly, she later passed away at Bethesda Home in Harpenden.

Mr and Mrs Gurney were also members, with their son John attending as part of the congregation. In their home I noticed a plaque that read,

"A Sabbath well spent brings a week of content, but a Sabbath profaned, whate'er may be gained, is a sure forerunner of sorrow." Interestingly, the church's original trust deed made no mention of Sabbath-keeping, and this idea only surfaced in a later, spurious set of articles presented to me when I sought membership.

Miss Bertha Ellis

Miss Bertha Ellis was like a mother in Israel, hosting many of the visiting ministers and playing the organ at our meetings. Occasionally, others such as John Snuggs or Mr Dix of Ivinghoe would play. Bertha once told me that the church had been established in 1831 and opened by John Warburton's son. She had minutes of that inaugural meeting, signed in his own hand, and a copy of the church's original articles of faith—doctrinally sound and wholly acceptable.

Church Anniversary Services

I greatly looked forward to anniversary services, both at Bierton and among neighbouring Gospel Standard churches. Thanks to the flexibility of my role at Granada TV Rentals, I was able to attend these events—something which would have been impossible had I remained with C. J. Ward & Son.

I attended services at Linslade, Prestwood, Barton-le-Clay, Waddesdon Hill, and Keeche's Chapel in Winslow. Visitors from near and far came to Bierton's own anniversary meetings.

Linslaid Strict and Particular Baptist Church

Linslaid Strict and Particular Baptist Chapel

Not all were fans of the Gospel Standard Articles. Mr Dix, the father of Kenneth Dix (pastor at Dunstable Baptist Church), and his wife were among those who voiced their opposition. Though their objections troubled me, I kept my thoughts to myself.

Linslade Strict and Particular Baptist Church

This was where Mr Collier pastored. Thanks to Alan Benning, I was introduced to this Gospel Standard cause and visited often. One memorable anniversary featured Mr Andrew Randalls, who had Brethren background. His earnestness and doctrinal awareness left an impression.

Waddesdon Hill Chapel

Waddesdon Hill Gospel Standard Chapel

Waddesdon Hill Gospel Standard Cause

Another favourite was Waddesdon Hill, a Gospel Standard cause founded in 1752. I remember with fondness attending with Bertha and Ruth Ellis, Alan Benning, and Grace Knight. Mr James Hill of Luton and Mr Collier often preached there.

Benjamin Keeche's Chapel at Winslow

Keeche's Chapel

Each year, an anniversary service was held at Keeche's Chapel, the oldest non-conformist place of worship in England. Dr Ian Paisley once preached there, as did Mr Collier and Mr Ramsbottom. I was greatly blessed by these services.

Prestwood Strict and Particular Baptist Church

Prestwood Gospel Standard

Prestwood was another Gospel Standard chapel we visited, where I first heard Mr Sparling-Tyler. At Hope Chapel in Barton-le-Clay, I took Bertha and Ruth Ellis to hear Stanley Delves and, on another occasion, Jessie Delves.

Meeting Other Christians and Friends

During this period, I met John Snuggs of Eaton Bray, who had come to Aylesbury for work. He attended our prayer meetings and introduced me to young people's meetings at Bethel Chapel, Luton, where Mr Ramsbottom often lectured. Afterwards, we would go to Bethesda Rest Home in Harpenden for refreshments and fellowship with Christians from various churches. These gatherings were encouraging.

Excessive Work and Depression

Meanwhile, I continued at Granada TV Rentals and was promoted to Workshop Manager. Though I enjoyed the job, I became consumed by it. My devotion suffered, and the things of God receded into the background. Though I attended church, I struggled to disconnect from work.

I soon realised I was not managing well. I took on too much, worked long hours, and even on my days off. Though our branch became the best-performing in the region, it came at great personal cost. I could no longer cope with the stress and began experiencing overwhelming bouts of anxiety. I feared I was reliving the mental trauma of a previous LSD episode, though now entirely sober.

My manager, Tony Burnham, who was not a believer, had earlier noticed me reading Calvin's Commentary on Daniel during lunch breaks. But by now, I had forsaken all such spiritual discipline in favour of work.

One afternoon, while on the garage roof at Mount Street, I mentally broke. I couldn't think clearly or make decisions. Everything overwhelmed me. I resigned as manager and returned to being a technician. This felt like failure and ushered in a period of depression that lasted nearly three years.

It was during this dark time I learned that the Christian life could be painful and soul-searching. I was driven to seek help from the God of all grace, clinging to His mercy. I felt lonely and longed to find a wife.

In the midst of it all, I found great solace in the hymns and preaching at Bierton. One particular hymn by John Newton was especially helpful:

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way,
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favoured hour,
At once He'd answer my request;
And, by His love's constraining power,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more, with His own hand
He seemed Intent to aggravate my woe;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this?" I trembling cried,
"Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?""
'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for grace and faith."

"These inward trials I employ,
From self and pride to set thee free;
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may'st seek thy all in Me."

CHAPTER 20
I Join The Bierton Church

After some time attending the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, I felt it my responsibility to seek formal membership. Having experienced the new birth and received believer's baptism, I believed I ought to support the cause of Christ at Bierton.

I was received into church membership on 8th January 1976.

Articles of Religion: A Concern

A problem soon arose. The Articles of Religion presented to me for subscription were not those recorded in the original trust deed of 1831. Two particular articles caused concern and, in good conscience, I could not subscribe to them.

Assistance from Mr Hill of Luton Ebenezer

I shared my concerns with Mr Hill, Pastor of Ebenezer Chapel in Luton, who understood my misgivings. Upon reviewing the original Articles of Religion for Bierton, we discovered there was no record explaining how the other, questionable articles had come into use. The church rightly concluded that it was bound by the articles listed in its founding trust deed of 1831. I was gladly received into membership based upon my confession of faith and my acceptance of those original articles.

The Two Articles in Question

Article 12: *"We believe that Christ has set apart a day of rest, to be kept holy, and for his honour and glory, which is the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday.*" (Mark 2:27; Acts 16:13; Hebrews 4:9)

I could not subscribe to this, as I did not believe these scriptures supported the claim.

Article 16: "*We believe all infants who die in their infancy go to heaven by virtue of the death of Christ.*" (Matthew 19:13–15)

Again, I could not affirm this article. While I granted that if any infants do go to heaven, it must be by virtue of Christ's atonement, the cited scriptures did not teach this doctrine.

A Bereavement and a Testimony

Not long after I joined, Mrs Evered's husband, a church member, passed away. I was invited to the funeral and later to a family gathering at their home, where I was asked to share my testimony. It was there I met the Groom family, who had previously belonged to Prestwood Strict Baptist Church but had relocated to Brighton.

Introduced to Mr Sparling-Tyler

Mrs Evered had earlier introduced me to Pastor Mr Sparling-Tyler at Prestwood Chapel in 1975. During our conversation, he graciously asked if I had found the Lord Jesus as my personal Saviour. I replied, "No, but rather, He had found me."

Meeting Pastor Frank L. Gosden

I Am Introduced To Pastor Frank L. Gosden

Mr Frank L Gosden Gilead Chapel Brighton

Gilead Chapel Brighton

Gilead Chapel Brighton

Mr and Mrs Groom were members at Gilead Chapel, Brighton, under

the pastoral care of Mr Frank L. Gosden. They arranged for me to visit him and share my testimony. It was a great privilege. We spent an afternoon together at his modest home, and before I left, he gifted me his personal set of Dr John Gill's Commentaries on the Whole Bible, in six volumes. These became my cherished source of study and instruction.

At the time, I had also obtained a copy of William Huntington's The Everlasting Love of God Toward His Elect. It confirmed my conviction that Arminian doctrine was in error. Mr Groom noted that it was deep reading, and I would recommend it to any serious Christian.

Before Mr Gosden's pastorate, Gilead Chapel had been pastored by J. K. Popham (1847–1937), who was also editor of the Gospel Standard from 1905 to 1937. A volume of his life and letters, Valiant for Truth, was written by J. H. Gosden.

A Visitor from Scotland

During one of our weeknight meetings, we welcomed a visitor named James from the Bethlehem Meeting Hall at Penn, where John Metcalf was pastor. James had formerly been with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland—renowned Calvinists. He informed me that many Presbyterians opposed both the Gospel Standard view of the non-offer of the gospel and the belief that the Law of Moses was not the rule of life for the believer.

The Law and the Gospel

I could not embrace the idea of a free offer of Christ to all men, for Christ died only for the elect. Though the Gospel is to be preached universally, Christ Himself is not on offer. I also believed, with William Huntington and John Metcalf, that the law was not the believer's rule of life. Through union with Christ in His death and resurrection, the believer is delivered from the law. The rule of life is the Gospel—the perfect law of liberty.

James wished to hear Mr Sparling-Tyler preach at The Dicker and asked me to take him. I agreed. However, as I was employed by Granada TV Rentals and drove a company vehicle clearly marked with their logo, James became uneasy. He was conscious of the disapproval among many churchgoers towards owning a television. He asked that I park the vehicle out of sight so as not to bring reproach. Though slightly irritated, I honoured his request, knowing how deeply he felt.

We attended all three services—morning, afternoon, and evening. There I also met Mr Tyler's son and his wife, who were members at Linslade Strict Baptist Church.

Television: A Point of Contention

I began to realise that the subject of television was controversial—not just among the Strict Baptists but also the Brethren. It was an issue I would need to consider more thoroughly in due time.

Zoar Strict Baptist Chapel

Zoar Strict Baptist Chapel, Lower Dicker

Not All Preaching at Bierton Was Good

Our visiting ministers came from near and far. Only a few were Gospel Standard listed. Below is a list of our ministers, identifying those associated with Gospel Standard (GS):

Mr Hill, Pastor of Ebenezer Luton (GS Trustee)

Mr Collier, Pastor, Linslade Bethel (GS)

Mr Goode, Pastor, Dunstable Baptist

Mr Martin Hunt, Colnbrook (GS)

Mr King, Minister at Bierton (Church Trustee)

Mr Martin White, Colnbrook

Mr C. A. Wood, Pastor, Croydon (GS)

Mr Hope, Pastor, Reading

Mr Howard Sayers, Minister, Watford (GS)

Mr Crane, Lakenheath

Mr Tim Martin, Blunham (GS Trustee)

Mr Levy, Deacon, Dunstable Baptist

Mr John Gosden, Southborough

Mr Lawrence, Harold (Evangelical)

Mr Ramsbottom, Pastor, Luton Bethel (Gospel Standard Editor, GS)

Mr Scott Pearson, Baptist Pastor

Mr Baumber, Bedford Providence (GS Trustee)

Mr Dawson, Kent

Mr Tanton, Tenterden

Mr Gould, Limes Avenue Baptist

Mr Dix, Pastor, Dunstable and Trinitarian Bible Society rep

Mr Terence Brown, Minister and Secretary, Trinitarian Bible Society

Mr Redhead, Potten End?

Mr Gerald Buss, Strict Baptist

Mr Buss (senior), Strict Baptist

Mr Howe, Pastor, Ivinghoe

Mr Paul Rowland (Presbyterian leanings)

Mr G. Ashdown, Protestant Alliance

Doctrinal Divergence

It became evident that our visiting ministers differed widely in their understanding of Scripture. Some followed the 1689 Confession, others the 1966 Strict Baptist Confession. Some leaned Presbyterian, others believed in duty-faith and repentance. One could not even accept the original Bierton Articles of 1831.

Appointed Secretary and Correspondent

Eventually, I was asked to serve as Church Secretary and Correspondent, responsible for arranging ministers for the upcoming year. I found the role daunting but accepted it as a solemn duty.

One notable event was a letter from Colnbrook Strict and Particular Baptist Church, stating that their member, Mr Martin Hunt, was under discipline. Martin was one of our visiting ministers—a courteous man with good scriptural understanding. Mr King and I were tasked with investigating. The issue centred on his views of particular redemption. I asked if he could subscribe to our Bierton Articles of 1831, and he replied he could not. That resolved the matter, and the church decided not to invite him again. We avoided passing judgement and respected the concerns of Colnbrook Church.

Church Minutes Cause for Concern

As secretary, I had access to the church's minutes. To my dismay, I discovered that Mr and Mrs Evered had previously tabled motions preventing certain ministers from preaching based on unsubstantiated claims. I raised this with the church, emphasising that such actions were contrary to the Gospel. However, one member, feeling implicated, became so distressed that it was agreed best to let the matter rest. I realised I had crossed Mrs Evered.

I continued in my role as secretary and correspondent until I married and moved briefly to Leicester.

CHAPTER 21

Caterham Strict Baptist Holiday – I Meet My Wife

In 1976, amidst a season of loneliness and depression, friends of Alan Benning—namely Paul and Susan Aston—kindly invited me to join a Christian holiday in Switzerland. Paul was a student at the Watford Evangelical Bible College, and I accepted their invitation. During that trip, I learned of another forthcoming holiday, organised by Caterham Strict Baptist Church, to be held at the Elim Pentecostal Bible College in Capel.

It was there, at Capel, that I met my future wife: Miss Irene Protheroe, from Shepshed, Leicestershire, where Paul Cook was pastor of the local Evangelical Church.

I Meet Other Evangelicals – Doctrinal Differences in Coventry

Irene had previously lived in Coventry and introduced me to her Christian friends, including the minister of Holbrooks Evangelical Church. I found their company warm and sincere in their desire to follow the Lord. However, our doctrinal conversations revealed significant differences: predestination, particular redemption, the believer's relationship to the Law of Moses, and the rejection of the free offer of the gospel all proved points of contention. Nevertheless, we were able to engage charitably and agree to disagree.

These discussions further enlightened me to the marked differences between Evangelicals and Strict and Particular Baptists, especially the exclusivity reflected in the Gospel Standard Articles. I was increasingly being cast into the mould of Gospel Standard convictions.

At that time, I also learned that Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones' successor at Westminster Chapel, London—R. T. Kendall—espoused a four-point Calvinist position, rejecting particular redemption. This deeply concerned me.

Preparation for Marriage

Irene and I were engaged in December 1977. Around that time, I secured a place on the Technical Teacher Training Course at Wolverhampton Teacher Training College. I resigned from Granada TV Rentals and moved into student lodgings.

Meanwhile, we purchased our first home: a property at 64B Moat Street,

Wigston, which proved to be a sound investment.

Marriage and Our First Home

Our First Home

64B Moat Street Wigston

On 9th December 1977, I married Irene at Bethel Evangelical Church in Wigston. While I continued in lodgings during my studies in Wolverhampton, Irene lived at our new home. We moved in together following the wedding.

On the Subject of Marriage Counselling

In the lead-up to marriage, I became deeply concerned about the morality of birth control. I sought advice from the only married male church member I knew, despite my embarrassment. To my dismay, his entire counsel was, "Moderation in all things." I found this response wholly unhelpful. Looking back, the ignorance surrounding such matters was regrettable, even laughable.

Our Move to Luton

My first teaching post was at Luton College of Higher Education, where I began lecturing in electronics in September 1978. We were granted a council house at Lewsey Farm, Dunstable. Amusingly, we obtained permission to keep our two goats in the coal shed of the rear garden at our Wigston home.

Our Move to Linslade

Desiring to be under pastoral care—especially now that Irene was new to the Strict Baptist way—I determined we should join the Linslade Strict

and Particular Baptist Church, where Mr Collier was pastor.

Our Home In Linslaid

Our home in Linslaid

We eventually purchased a home called "Fairholme" on Queen Street, Linslade, for £14,000 with a mortgage. It proved practical and placed us near the local chapel.

Free Presbyterian Church

Free Presbyterian Church

I had long wished to visit Scotland and the Presbyterian churches. We rented an old schoolhouse in Waternish, on the Isle of Skye, which had once belonged to the 1960s pop singer Donovan. To reach it, we crossed by ferry to Portree.

We were unaware that the Presbyterians held communion services only

twice a year, and our visit coincided with one such Sabbath—referred to as their "Mount of Ordinances." We attended the morning meeting and were warmly received. During the service, men known to the elders were invited to "speak to the question"—a tradition unfamiliar to me. I was addressed as "Mr Clarke of the Strict Baptists," and asked to speak on Philippians 1:29: "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." I gave an exposition of the verse.

A Communion Invitation and an Elders' Inquiry

Following my address, we were invited to renew our covenant vows and partake of communion. Unfamiliar with the practice of covenant renewal, I declined.

Later, I was summoned to meet with the elders and asked why I had not joined in the Lord's Supper. I explained my ignorance of their custom, and they were satisfied. We were invited to lunch at an elder's home.

"Silence, Woman – These Are Guests"

At table, a senior man in his eighties presided. Another guest asked us about our views, and was surprised to learn that we did not baptise infants. "What? You don't baptise infants?" she exclaimed. The elderly gentleman promptly interjected, "Silence, woman—these are guests!" I found his rebuke humorous, and would gladly have explained further had the conversation continued.

Rev. Frazer MacDonald at Portree

Church Building Noticeboard

Portree Free Presbyterian Church

That evening, we attended a service at Portree where Rev. Frazer

MacDonald ministered. His preaching exalted Christ, and in keeping with Presbyterian custom, he warmly invited all sinners to come to Christ.

Later, while visiting another home, I was challenged for not holding to the free offer of the gospel, as preached that evening. Though it was not the time for detailed discussion, it became clear that the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and Gospel Standard churches had significant differences—not least concerning the free offer.

Return to Bierton

Upon our return from Skye, we resolved to return to Bierton and support the cause. This, however, meant securing funds to purchase a property in Bierton—an expensive endeavour. To raise funds, I decided to sell my house in Aylesbury.

House at Canal Side Terrace in Aylesbury

3 Canal Side Terrace, Aylesbury. My first House

"Angels" Come to Help – Or So I Thought

Before marriage, I had purchased and renovated a terraced house at 3 Canal Side, Aylesbury, with a £3,000 loan from Barclays, repaid over three years. In 1977, I began teacher training at Wolverhampton and let three rooms in the house to tenants. My mother managed the bills.

One tenant's boyfriend later became a tenant too, and after marrying, they rented a double room together. They also occasionally used my own room, by arrangement. I retained the understanding that, should I return, they would vacate.

In October 1980, I decided to sell the house and had found a buyer. I also made an offer to Mr Groom of Great Lane, Bierton. Unfortunately, the tenants claimed a right of occupancy and brought in the Rent Officer, who reduced their rent.

Unable to proceed with the sale, I was forced to withdraw from purchasing Mr Groom's property. He was disappointed and requested £1,000 compensation, citing losses due to the broken housing chain. I felt dismayed.

Believing I was in the right, I took the tenants to court. Without legal knowledge, I represented myself. The judge stopped me as I read from my notes and ruled against me for failing to follow legal protocol. My mother, who accompanied me, protested aloud in court. I left, shocked. I had expected justice; instead, I was dumbfounded.

What Was That All About?

The next day, the male tenant—an Irishman—asked me, "What was all that about last night?" Confused, I asked what he meant. He said two men had come round wielding lumps of wood and told them to get out. I denied all knowledge. I concluded that perhaps angels had been sent to warn them. This notion comforted me for a time.

Eventually, I had to employ a barrister. Months later, the couple agreed to purchase the property at market rate. The legal fees cost me at least £800.

Years later, my brother confessed that he and our mutual friend, Pete Sinfield, had been the "angels."

Prevented from Buying a House

As mentioned, I had to withdraw from purchasing Mr Groom's bungalow. He was understandably upset. The following letter was sent to me:

17th November 1980

Dear David,

After you withdrew from the sale of Great Lane, we found ourselves in great difficulty. We had until the end of December to complete our purchase, which proved impossible. Though the builders were

accommodating, the price rose by £1,500. Combined with increased solicitor's fees, we had to borrow extra funds.

We wonder whether you might consider helping with £1,000 of this amount. We chose to sell to you, rather than a cash buyer, because you were a friend from Bierton Chapel.

We would not ask unless we truly needed it.

Yours sincerely,

John G.

My Reply

Dear Mr G,

Thank you for your letter of 17th November 1980. Irene and I are glad that you have moved, though saddened that the process cost more than expected.

Your request has caused much exercise of conscience. We do not believe we are morally obligated to assist, and regret that we are also unable to do so due to our own financial constraints.

Had we felt obligated, we would gladly have offered help. In a prior sale, I did offer compensation to a purchaser who incurred costs due to my tenants refusing to vacate. However, in our case, matters were subject to contract, and we kept you informed throughout.

We apologise for the inconvenience. We trust God in His providence has overruled for reasons known to Him, which may yet be revealed.

Yours in Christian regards,

David Clarke.

Dealings of this nature often leave a bitter aftertaste, but must be left in God's hands. These trials remind us that Christians, too, are not immune from the everyday difficulties of life, especially in property dealings. Mr

Groom felt aggrieved, but I had likewise been let down by my tenants. Such is the nature of life in this fallen world.

CHAPTER 22

Bierton Gospel Standard Cause 1981

During this period, several moves were initiated by Mrs Evered for the church to join the Gospel Standard list of Churches. As our secretary, she had been finding it increasingly difficult to obtain supply preachers. Her sister, Mrs Groom, and brother-in-law were members of Prestwood Strict and Particular Baptists and were keen for Bierton to become a listed church. I was aware that some members were quite content with the ministers we were currently engaging and saw no need to affiliate with the Gospel Standard.

It was during the time we were endeavouring to move back to Bierton that, on the 16th of January 1981, our church resolved to join the Gospel Standard list of Churches. Mr Hope, Pastor of the Reading Strict Baptist Church, chaired the meeting. He kindly agreed to handle all necessary documentation regarding the matter, and we were subsequently recognised as a Gospel Standard cause. The proposal had been made by Mr King and seconded by Mrs Evered, and a unanimous decision by ballot was taken. Thus, it was agreed that we become a Gospel Standard listed cause.

This, however, was not without opposition from outside the church. Mr Dix, Pastor of Dunstable Baptist Church, informed me personally that we were "out of order" and that it was illegal for us to adopt the Gospel Standard Articles of Religion and their Rules of Conduct. I have written further on this in The Bierton Crisis 1984.

Ruth Ellis, a Church Member, Dies

At this time, Ruth Ellis, who had been a great encouragement to my wife and me before we were married, passed away. I used to visit her regularly with a friend, and we enjoyed blessed fellowship in the Lord. Eventually, she required full-time care and spent her remaining days at the Bethesda Home in Harpenden. It was noted that one could always enjoy deep and edifying conversations with her on spiritual matters.

Mr Collier, Pastor of Linslade

In early April 1982, Mr Collier from Linslade visited our church midweek during our prayer meeting and spoke on the subject of the Falklands War, as England was then at war with Argentina. He informed the church of the ancient conflict between the Roman Catholic system and the Reformation in Europe, noting that Argentina was a Roman Catholic country. Mr Collier was a friend of Dr Ian Paisley, and through this connection we had the opportunity to hear Ian Paisley preach at Mr Green's church in London. He was always a powerful preacher, though he held different views on some doctrinal points.

Concerning Mr Collier, his family remarked:

"If he had been disturbed by events in the first twenty-five years of his pastorate, he was even more profoundly disturbed by developments since. Blatantly heretical statements from so-called Church leaders, the fresh impetus given to the ecumenical drift by the charismatic movement, the historic visit of the Pope to this country in 1982 — all these things affected him deeply. His response, however, was not to project himself back into the past in a nostalgia for better days. It was to work for the present and for the future. It was to recognise that God is still working today in raising up a witness to the gospel. He found encouragement in his contact with other ministers both within his own denomination and outside; and it is a simple matter of fact that the extent of such contact increased in his latter days."

I Meet Dr Ian Paisley at Oxford

At this time, a memorial rally was held in Oxford to commemorate our martyrs Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley. I remember Ian Paisley echoing those powerful words, "Fear not, we shall light a fire in England that will never be put out."

Shortly after Mary's accession in 1553, Latimer was summoned to appear before the council at Westminster. Though he could have fled — and he remarked that "Smithfield already groaned for him" — he joyfully obeyed. The pursuant, he said, was "a welcome messenger." The harsh conditions of imprisonment and the long disputations at Oxford took a toll on his health, but he endured all with unwavering cheerfulness.

On the 16th of October 1555, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley were led to the stake at Oxford. Latimer, known for his humility and absence of fanaticism, greeted Ridley with the words:

"Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as (I trust) shall never be put out."

He "received the flame as it were embracing it. After he had stroked his face with his hands, and (as it were) bathed them a little in the fire, he soon died (as it appeared) with very little pain or none."

Archbishop Cranmer, on the day of his execution, dramatically withdrew his previous recantations and died a heretic to the Roman Catholics, but a martyr to others. His enduring legacy remains within the Church of England through The Book of Common Prayer and The Thirty-Nine Articles. He renounced all that he had written or signed since his degradation and declared that his hand should be the first to burn.

He then said:

"And as for the Pope, I refuse him, as Christ's enemy, and Antichrist with all his false doctrine."

He was pulled from the pulpit and taken to the place where Latimer and Ridley had been burnt six months earlier. As the flames rose, he fulfilled his vow by placing his right hand into the heart of the fire. His final words were:

"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit... I see the heavens open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God."

Rescuing Michael's Rolls-Royce (circa 1982)

Amidst these events, my brother Michael found himself in serious difficulties. His business was failing, and he became very depressed, unable to resolve certain issues. He told me he had sold his Rolls-Royce to someone in Milton Keynes for £7,000, but was still owed £3,500. Being unwell, he could not deal with it further. The buyer kept making excuses and delaying payment.

Feeling indignant, I refused to sit back and let someone take advantage of Michael in his vulnerable state. I said, "Come on, Michael, I'll go with you and sort this out." Wearing my Crombie overcoat and suit, I looked official and confident. We went to the person's house early one morning in

Milton Keynes. I introduced myself, explained why we were there, and said I was a Christian who wanted to resolve the matter honourably. The man looked rather startled.

Michael decided he wanted the car back. An agreement was made: he would return the £3,500 and reclaim the vehicle. However, I discovered that the original sale had involved more than one person and that the car was in another garage. Additionally, a finance company had become involved. It seemed straightforward at first — we would retrieve the car with the cash.

Michael later revealed that the buyers had financed the car and only paid him half. He feared that if he gave them the £3,500, he would lose that too, as the finance company might claim ownership. He had already gone to the police, but they said it was a civil matter. Michael confessed he couldn't recall signing any finance documents. I began to suspect the matter was more complicated than I had realised.

I also began to sense that Michael had been party to some kind of deal and wasn't telling me everything. It appeared these men had deceived him while he was unwell. Years later, Michael confirmed this — they had indeed taken advantage of him.

Michael chose to recover the vehicle. He paid two of his 'heavier' friends £250 to retrieve the car. Sure enough, the next day, the Rolls-Royce was safely stored in my garage in Bierton. That gave me some comfort, though it didn't solve the deeper issue. Michael continued to worry. There was more to this than met the eye, particularly concerning the finance company.

I felt let down because Michael hadn't been entirely honest with me from the start. (He later insisted I was mistaken.) Had he shared all the facts, I could have helped. Eventually, the finance company contacted him. By then, he realised the car legally belonged to them. Unable to handle the stress, he agreed to return the car, acknowledging that the entire transaction had not been above board.

In hindsight, I believe it might have been better to keep the car and offer the £3,500 to the finance company, but I was powerless to act because I hadn't been told the full truth.

I was saddened for Michael — he lost both the car and the money. As is

often the case, wisdom comes too late.

CHAPTER 23
A Call To Preach The Gospel

I believe that God places the desire to preach and declare His Word into the hearts of those whom He calls. That desire was planted in my heart the very day the Lord Jesus called me to hear and believe in Him. From that moment, my earnest longing was to help others turn from the broad road that leads to destruction, and to look to Christ alone for salvation. That desire was acknowledged by the Lord Jesus Himself on the night I was saved. When I asked, "What about the others?" His reply impressed upon my heart was that all I could do was tell them. What better way than to preach to men the unsearchable riches of Christ?

I had spoken on several occasions at Bierton Church during weeknight prayer meetings, sharing from the table—not from the pulpit. Yet, over time, I began to feel increasingly uncomfortable merely sitting in the pew, especially when sermons were poorly expressed or doctrinally unsound. It grieved me to hear the ignorance of the religious, whose spiritual blindness led them to bind heavy burdens on others. One such instance involved a lady visitor and the issue of head coverings, which I will discuss later. I am not against the head covering for a woman; rather, the treatment of this visitor was what I believed to be deeply wrong.

I Did Not Believe in Bible Colleges

When I first became a Christian, I had no confidence in Bible Colleges. My thinking was, "I do not want men to teach me—I want God to teach me." From what I had seen of vicars and so-called trained ministers, I found no evidence that they were even born again. I therefore concluded that Bible Colleges were of little use.

Wolverhampton Polytechnic – Teacher Training

Although I dismissed Bible Colleges, I was eager to learn all I could about God and how to speak His Word with clarity and truth. This desire led me to read about the lives of godly men. I transitioned from reading The Beano, The Dandy, and James Bond novels, to the Bible—and then on to the writings of John Bunyan, Dr John Gill, John Owen, and John Calvin—all within a span of two to three years.

It was when I met my wife-to-be that she encouraged me to train as a teacher. As a result, I enrolled at Wolverhampton Technical Training College to learn how to teach technical subjects.

An Ulterior Motive

My deeper motive was to learn how to teach so that I might effectively communicate the Gospel. I took a year out from work and studied at Wolverhampton Polytechnic, eventually receiving a Certificate in Education, awarded by Birmingham University in 1978.

I believed I could learn from skilled secular educators how to teach, and then use that knowledge to present divine truths in a way men could understand.

I began my first teaching post at Luton College of Higher Education in 1978.

Wolverhampton Teacher Training Group

David (B center Right) at Wolverhampton Polytechnic

Wolverhampton Teacher Training Group: David (Back, centre right) at Wolverhampton Polytechnic

I Inform the Church at Bierton of My Felt Call to Preach

During this time at Luton College and Bierton Church, I felt compelled to make known to the church my sense of being called by God to preach the Gospel.

The church invited Mr Hill of Luton and Mr Hope of Reading—both Gospel Standard ministers—to examine my calling.

Questioned About the Law of Moses

Mr Hill questioned my understanding of the believer's relationship to the Law of Moses. Both he and Mr Hope listened as I explained that the Law of Moses did not make the Lord Jesus righteous—for He was always righteous. He possessed essential righteousness in Himself, independent of the Law. He did not become righteous by fulfilling the Law; rather, had He been judged by it, He would have been declared righteous—and so He was.

I affirmed that the imputed righteousness which justifies the believer is the righteousness of God, freely given to all who believe, and that this imputed righteousness of Christ justifies us apart from our own works.

Mr Hill's Conclusion

Mr Hill concluded that my sense of calling was genuine, and Mr Hope concurred. It was then brought before the church that I should begin to preach and exercise whatever gift the Lord had given me. People came from Albert Street Strict Baptist Church (Oxford), and Eaton Bray Strict Baptist Church to hear me preach during a weeknight meeting at Bierton.

Sent by the Church to Preach

It was agreed, without question, that I should preach as the Lord opened the way. From that day in 1982, letters began arriving from different churches requesting that I preach in various Strict Baptist chapels throughout the country. This, I believe, was my calling from the Lord and my commissioning by the church to proclaim the Gospel—trusting that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.

I Preach at Various Churches

I was soon overwhelmed with preaching requests. I could have preached three times every Sunday throughout the year, in addition to midweek services—on top of full-time work and two nights of teaching at Luton College, while also studying through the Open University.

Below is a list of the churches I was engaged to preach at:

Place	Church
Oakington	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Eaton Bray	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Oxford	Hope Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard

Uffington	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Grove	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Evington	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Stamford	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Leicester Zion	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Luton Ebenezer	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Reading Zoar	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Fenstanton	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Attleborough	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Beeches Road	Independent Baptists
Bradford	Strict and Particular Baptists
Nottingham	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Matfield	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard
Blackheath	Strict and Particular Baptists, Gospel Standard

Hats or Head Coverings for Ladies

Trouble arose in 1983 through religious legalism. One Sunday morning I brought Dick Holmes' daughter to chapel. Dick was a well-known man in Aylesbury. She had gone through a painful divorce and was facing severe hardship. I invited her to church, believing she needed the help of God.

She arrived wearing tight black trousers and a short top that accentuated her figure. Her long, peroxide-blonde hair and makeup stood in stark contrast to the modest attire of the elderly ladies, all of whom wore hats.

This was too much for Mrs Evered, who approached me after the meeting (I use meeting because New Testament gatherings were not called "services") and said that next time I brought a woman to chapel, she should be wearing a hat.

Mrs Evered insisted that all Gospel Standard churches required women to cover their heads, and so should we.

I replied that whatever others did, they were wrong to impose such a rule upon a non-member or a visiting woman with no profession of faith. I told her the matter should be raised in the church meeting.

This spirit of legalism grieved me. Here was a woman in distress, needing the mercy and love of God as revealed in Christ Jesus—and Mrs Evered was more concerned about outward appearance.

I understood the principle that a believing woman should dress modestly, be in subjection to her husband, and wear a covering when praying or prophesying. I also upheld the teaching that a woman is not to usurp authority over a man or teach in the church.

But for Mrs Evered to instruct me—a man—to command an unbelieving visitor to wear a hat, in order to uphold a principle for believers, was hypocrisy.

Scripture says the covering is to be a sign to the angels that she is under authority (1 Cor. 11). Mrs Evered missed the heart of the Gospel and, in her zeal to enforce a form, transgressed the very principle she sought to uphold.

This spirit was not of God. I believed that only the preaching of the Gospel could deliver men from such religious bondage—but who would preach it?

A Spanking from the Pulpit

I was always mindful of the biblical instruction regarding the discipline of children. Scripture warns that if we spare the rod, we spoil the child (Prov. 13:24). Another passage exhorts that a man must rule his household well, with obedient children—for if he cannot do that, how shall he take care of the church of God? (1 Tim. 3:5–12).

I believed the Bible clearly supported corporal discipline (Prov. 29:15; Prov. 23:13).

The first occasion I disciplined Isaac, he was very small—perhaps four years old. I used a thin, green garden cane and told him it hurt me more than it would hurt him. After receiving his smacks, he burst into tears and said, "Daddy, that stings." From then on, the cane was called "the stinging stick."

On another occasion, while I was preaching at Bierton Chapel, Isaac misbehaved at the back of the chapel with his mother. I paused mid-sermon, came down from the pulpit, and took him outside to correct him with the rod. The spanking could apparently be heard throughout the chapel. Some ladies were shocked but said nothing. I believed I had acted rightly, in accordance with:

"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction

shall drive it far from him."
— Proverbs 22:15

Is Corporal Punishment Correct?

"Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins."
— Proverbs 10:12
"A rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding."
— Proverbs 10:13
"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."
— Proverbs 13:24
"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."
— Proverbs 19:18
"The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly."
— Proverbs 20:30
"Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."
— Proverbs 23:13–14
"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."
— Proverbs 29:15

Answer: Yes.

CHAPTER 24
The Papal Visit – 1982

In 1982, Pope John Paul II was due to visit Britain — the first such visit in over 400 years. Very few people recognised the significance of this event, but I felt compelled to inform others of its implications.

I wrote to the Bierton Church, which met on 16th January 1982 (exactly 14 years to the day of my conversion), suggesting we invite a member of the British Council of Protestant Christian Churches. My proposal was to use the Bierton Chapel to host a meeting and teach clear biblical principles about how we might respond responsibly and maintain a godly witness

during these times. I believed such a gathering would be helpful to many local churches.

Mrs Evered responded that the Bierton Chapel was not the appropriate venue, and suggested the village hall instead. Mr King remarked that they had Roman Catholic friends and did not wish to offend them.

From this point, I began to question the direction of the church at Bierton and believed I would see the hand of God come against her. I remembered the Scripture: "Them that honour me I will honour."

Our Home In Bierton

187 Aylesbury Road Bierton

I decided to hold the meeting in our home and invited several people from various churches. Rev. Gordon Ferguson came and preached. Around this time, we were also blessed to purchase our own home in Bierton — a detached bungalow just down the road from the chapel. I felt truly blessed by God to be so close to our place of worship.

However, I was deeply shocked at the reluctance of the Bierton Church to allow the chapel to be used to warn about the errors of the Papal system of Rome, especially as the Pope's visit to Britain was such a significant moment.

I saw Pope John Paul II on television during his appearance at Wembley Stadium. The vast crowd — thousands strong — were singing, "He's got the whole world in his hands" in praise of the Pope, who received that praise

openly. I saw it with my own eyes and ears. I believed then and there that this man is an Antichrist. I felt compelled to speak out — or else the stones would cry out.

A Letter to Rev. D.B., an Anglican Vicar

Following the Pope's visit to Britain on 28th May 1982, I felt it necessary to examine more closely the claims of the Papacy and the Roman Catholic Church. My sensitivity to the activities of Rome heightened, especially as I observed the Anglican Church drawing ever closer to her.

About a year later, I read an article in a magazine called Contact, written by Rev. D.B., an Anglican Vicar at Walton Street Church of England. I was moved to respond.

Letter dated 17th August 1982

187 Aylesbury Road, Bierton, Buckinghamshire

Dear Mr Brewin,

Having read your article, Roman Catholicism, published in the May 1982 issue of Contact, I feel constrained to write to you as a preliminary step. Your views on Roman Catholicism and Pope John Paul II are not shared by many Christians.

You describe the Pope as "a man of deep spirituality and courage," worthy of our respect, and refer to him as a Christian and a Christian leader, though you acknowledge disagreements regarding his claimed authority. You go on to highlight areas of common ground between Anglicans and Roman Catholics:

A. Both are people of Christ

B. Both are people of the Bible

C. Both have sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion

D. Both are people of the Holy Spirit

You then point out real differences that ought to be remembered.

As a minister of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, I must say that your article and beliefs, in my view, endanger the flock over which you serve as overseer. I would be failing in my responsibility were I to remain silent.

May I, therefore, respond to your points?

A. "You are both people of Christ"

You base this on the fact that both churches call upon the name of Christ and worship Him as Saviour and Lord. But where is the evidence? To truly own Him as Lord means to reject all others — including saints, idols, and intermediaries.

Consider the present Pope, John Paul II. He calls upon Mary, the so-called Queen of Heaven, in prayer. In Return to Poland (Collins), it is recorded that before the Black Madonna of Jasna Góra — where he had previously whispered totus tuus (i.e. "completely yours") — he re-consecrated Poland to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, saying:

"I consecrate to you the whole Church—everywhere and to the ends of the earth. I consecrate to you all humanity... I consecrate to you Rome and Poland... Mother, accept us all! Mother, do not abandon us! Mother, be our guide!"

This contradicts your assertion that the Church of Rome calls solely upon the name of Christ. How can such a man be considered a Christian, or a man of deep spirituality, when he is steeped in idolatry?

B. "You are both people of the Bible"

You suggest that, since the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church has placed emphasis on Bible study. But which Bible do they promote?

The Roman Catholic Church elevates tradition as equal in authority to Scripture and includes the Apocrypha as canonical (Council of Trent, 1545).

The Apocrypha is used to support doctrines such as prayers for the dead (e.g. 2 Maccabees 12:40–45), which Protestants reject.

Catholics are still forbidden to read Protestant versions of the Bible unless approved (e.g. RSV Catholic Edition), and interpretations must align with Church dogma under penalty of mortal sin.

C. "Both have sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion"

This requires qualification. The Roman Catholic Mass and its concept of a sacrificing priesthood are heretical and contrary to the biblical Lord's Supper.

Their doctrine of baptism includes regeneration — whereby baptism is said to cleanse original sin and grant salvation. The Catechism of the Council of Trent states:

"Infants, unless regenerated unto God by the grace of baptism, whether their parents be Christian or infidels, are born to eternal misery and perdition."

This is in direct opposition to the biblical view of baptism and the gospel of grace.

D. "You are both people of the Holy Spirit"

You cite the impact of the charismatic renewal movement as evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in both communions.

But if both truly possess the Spirit of truth, why are they not led into the same truth?

Revelation 18:4 says, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." What spirit keeps people in Rome or leads Anglicans toward unity with her?

Is it the Spirit of God that leads Catholics to:

Offer the Mass as a re-sacrifice of Christ?

Bow before idols and pray to saints?

Or was it the Spirit of God who moved Luther and the Reformers to

leave Rome and reject the Pope?

What biblical evidence supports the idea that the Roman Catholic Church is moved by the Spirit of God?

You also deny that the Pope is the Antichrist — a view contradicted by the Reformers and founders of the Church of England. Consider Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley. Should we not keep to the same biblical standards and defend Christ's sheep against error, presenting them "as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2)?

My prayer is that Christian men in Aylesbury may unite in Christ's cause and truth, in love for the brethren and in Gospel unity and peace.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be the cause, and the communion of the Holy Spirit the means and life of His Church, now and forevermore.

Yours in Christian concern,
David Clarke
In membership of Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church

CHAPTER 25
I Go Fishing for Men

In May 1983, I was invited to preach at Bierton Church on Sunday, 5th June. I had always carried a burden to "catch men" for Jesus Christ — but how should one go about doing it? By then, I was living in Aylesbury, and many of my former friends remained in the area, still without hope and without God in the world.

I felt compelled to do something to reach them with the message of the love of God in Jesus Christ. Since I would be preaching at Bierton Church, I decided to approach the Bucks Herald, our local newspaper, to ask for some free advertising. I walked into their office and told them my story, explaining my desire to invite all my old friends to hear about what the Lord had done for me — and that they were all welcome on the 5th of June.

Though I was prepared to pay for the advert, I knew I was being cheeky in asking for it free. Little did I realise, I was about to give them their front-page story of the week. Before I knew it, a photographer and a reporter were

dispatched to interview me and take pictures.

To my amazement, the story appeared on the front page of the Bucks Herald on Thursday, 19th May 1983.

This meeting was also recorded and later made available on YouTube: (Click here to view) **David Preaches at Bierton Chapel 5th June1983**

Preparing for the Pulpit

I felt the need to be cautious. In October 1982, I had already encountered opposition from part of the church due to my support of a visiting preacher who had used the phrase "Evangelical Repentance" and read the Evangelical Times. I had defended him to the best of my ability, but for the sake of peace, I agreed not to invite him again. I was saddened by this compromise, and I believe Satan was provoked by my actions — and that worse was yet to come.

Because of this, I felt it was necessary to be especially careful with the June meeting.

The Bucks Herald

THURSDAY 19th May 1983 price 8d

David Fishes For Men

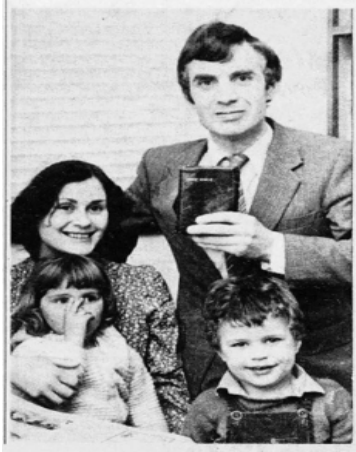
Former thief says: Come and be helped

REFORMED drug-taker and thief David Clarke hopes he can pass on the secret which diverted him from a life of crime.

For David — now a Christian and Baptist preacher — hopes his belief in the Bible will help his former friends to make more of their lives.

SERVICE

And he is planning a special service at 5.45 on June 5 to try to reach the people who were once his partners in crime.



David (33) of Aylesbury Road, Bierton, was convicted of 24 crimes when he confessed to them after his conversion to Christianity on an LSD trip in 1971.

He claimed at his court hearing that Jesus spoke to him while he was under the influence of the drug, and has been determined to pass the message on ever since.

"It is now time I tried to spread the word to the people I used to know in Aylesbury when I was a teenager," he told us.

"There are still many of them left in the town, and they have gone through broken marriages, drug addiction and crime.

LECTURER

"I hope they will come to my service and see what Jesus has done for me," said David, who is now married with two children and lectures in electronics at Luton Technical College.

He returned to Aylesbury 2½ years ago to rebuild his life.

"My adolescence was spent taking all sorts of drugs and stealing. I am glad I saw the way out of that," added David.

The service will be held at the Strict Baptist Church, Bierton, and he has thrown open the invitation to all his "ex-drunkard", criminal and drug-taking friends in Aylesbury.

Come And Be Helped

Bierton Pulpit

The Bierton Meeting 5th June 1983

Although I hadn't expected it, the article brought much attention. I hadn't informed the church in advance, so I felt obliged to explain everything in case it caused offence. Thankfully, no one seemed upset.

Thursday, 19th May 1983 – Price 8d
David Fishes For Men – Come and Be Helped – Bierton Pulpit

Fishing for Men

The following week, I literally went fishing — not for trout, but for souls. I visited pubs and homes, searching for former friends with whom I had once lived in crime, hoping to bring them to hear what Jesus had done for me — and what He could do for them.

It wasn't long before the national press caught wind of the story, and a version of it even appeared on the national telex network. Unfortunately, the article they ran trivialised the reality of what was happening. Here's what they printed:

From Peter Game, Ox and Bucks NA
Catch: Service

Reformed crook David Clarke is hot on the trail of his mates in crime.

He's turned detective to trace thieves, drug pushers, burglars, bandits, and drunks in a massive one-man round-up aimed at changing their lives.

David, 33, wants to pack them all into a tiny church in Bierton, Bucks,

to tell them how God saved him from a life behind bars.

The Aylesbury C.I.D. are welcome too, should they wish to join in the hymn singing.

David, a married man with two children, is a lay preacher in the Baptist Church.

"God helped me, and He can help my old buddies too," he said.

David, an electronics lecturer at a Polytechnic, added:
"I've already persuaded some of my old villainous pals to come along. I want to pack the church with criminals — but it's going to be tough."

The former thief and drug user left Borstal at 18 and went on to lead a life of crime.
"I was into car ringing, stealing vehicles and selling them. I've broken into care homes, taken garage equipment, robbed tills, nicked speedboat engines, sold drugs, and indulged in permissive sex. I even carried an axe and mallet in my car — just in case.

"Now everything has changed."

His life was transformed when he met Jesus Christ during a bad LSD trip. He joined the Baptist Church, and when later accused of an offence he didn't commit, he instead confessed to 24 that he had.

"I've had a clean sheet for 13 years. I'm not going to preach at these lads — just show them what God did for me and let them decide."

Ends.

Memo to the news desk: We believe this man is absolutely genuine in his actions.

The Meeting Itself

The meeting went ahead on 5th June 1983 — but sadly, not many people turned up. I heard that some stayed away because they didn't want to associate with each other. Pat Jones and Malcolm Kirkham were now enemies; not long before, Pat had reportedly visited Malcolm's home with a

shotgun. Malcolm, at the time, had been involved in drug dealing.

Mike West said he wasn't willing to sit beside drug pushers and criminals.

Nevertheless, I preached as faithfully as I could about the Lord Jesus Christ. I spoke from the pulpit about how good God had been to me — giving me a job, a wife, a home, children in church, and many friends. What more could any man want?

Several people commented that I had been blessed providentially — and I knew it.

My Troubles Begin

But from that point, it seemed that trouble came from every side.

First, I lost my church membership. Then my health failed, affecting my ability to preach. My children were afflicted. I lost my home, my job, and even, for a time, my faith in God. Eventually, I gave up on my marriage.

As I write this, I'm reminded of the story of Job — a man truly blessed by God who, after being tested by Satan, was ultimately restored. My hope is that my own story might likewise demonstrate God's faithfulness.

Meeting the Royce Family

Shortly afterward, I met Stephen Royce and his family, who were members of the Watford Strict Baptist Church. Stephen had become a believer but was struggling to accept the Added Articles of the Gospel Standard.

Though brought up under the ministry of Mr Hill at Watford, the church was now under Mr Sayers Sr., and his son Howard had been sent as a minister. Howard, however, openly disagreed with the Added Articles, which only made things more difficult for Stephen and his father.

Stephen wished to be baptised, but Mr Ramsbottom, pastor of Luton, wouldn't present his request to the church because Stephen could not fully subscribe to the Added Articles. Stephen asked: could he not be baptised simply as a believer without joining the church? He found the wording of the Added Articles contrary to Scripture.

I understood his dilemma and wrote him a detailed reply, since I was

both a member of a Gospel Standard Church and a minister. My reply is published in The Bierton Crisis, and I believe it offers a scriptural defence of the Gospel Standard position and its non-offer stance.

The Holy Table Incident

One Sunday, I brought my children to church along with my niece, who was about five years old. Before the meeting, I placed her cardigan on the front table — the same table used for hymn announcements, church business, and communion.

Mrs Evered approached me and said, in her usual gentle way, that I must remove the cardigan from "The Holy Table." I was shocked. A Holy Table?

We were not Roman Catholic or High Anglican. I was dismayed by this superstitious thinking. After the service, I asked the members to stay behind while I addressed this issue.

In front of Mrs Evered, I declared there was no such thing as a holy table in the New Testament. This was superstition, and I would not let such error go unchecked.

Miss G. Ellis became upset, saying, "I wouldn't want a pair of shoes on the kitchen table," and stormed out in frustration. I thought, We are in two different worlds.

I felt a burning zeal for truth — to the point that I wanted to chop the table to pieces in front of everyone. But I resolved to use the Sword of the Spirit instead.

Electronics, Television, and Superstition

I was well aware of the controversy surrounding television among Gospel Standard churches. I didn't watch it and had no interest in owning one — but having worked as a television engineer, I knew how irrational some objections were.

Mrs Evered even once said it was wrong for me to teach electronics, as I might be helping students learn to repair televisions. I could foresee future opposition not only to TV but also to radio, newspapers, cassette players, and other media.

Escorted from St. Albans Abbey

In October 1983, I learned that St. Albans Abbey, an Anglican church, had invited a Roman Catholic priest — Father Robert Plourde — to regularly offer Mass there. This was unprecedented in 400 years and contrary to the Act of Settlement and the 39 Articles.

No one seemed to care. But I had studied Roman Catholicism and knew its errors. I felt compelled to protest.

I brought my children, Isaac (5) and Esther (4), and attended the Saturday meeting. Rev. Scott Pearson of the British Council of Protestant Churches stood and protested — and was promptly escorted out.

I did the same — and was also escorted out, with my children in hand.

Reactions in the Press

The Bucks Herald

19th October 1983

AN unholy uproar involving a Bierton man and others broke out at St. Albans Abbey on Saturday because of the involvement of a Roman Catholic priest in the service.

The protest by Mr. David Clarke, of 187 Aylesbury Road, concerned Father Robert Plourde who, along with Methodist minister the Rev. Donald Lee, was being welcomed to the Abbey.

An initial protest was made by a representative from Malden, in Bedfordshire, of the British Council of Protestant Christian Churches, who then left the Abbey.

Before the service resumed however Mr. Clarke stood up and said he protested about a Catholic priest being appointed as an assistant in the Church of England.

Mr. Clarke told the clergy and congregation that to invite what he described as a Popish person to conduct masses, was contrary to Christian principles and the Gospel of Christ.

David Clarke

The authorities of the Abbey were betraying the people into the hands of the Papal Anti-Christ, he stated. At this point he was escorted from the Abbey, accompanied by his four-year-old son and three-year-old daughter.

Mr. Clarke, a 34-year-old lecturer of electronics at Luton College of Higher Education, is a member of the Baptist Church in Bierton, and himself preaches in various churches.

This was the first official service in the Church of England, as far as he knew, to give recognition in that way, he said.

A representative of the Abbey said the two part-time ecumenical chaplains had already been appointed and were being welcomed on Saturday at the inter-denominational service.

Father Plourde would now be able to celebrate Mass in the Abbey for people who wanted to take it, she said, pointing out that all were welcome at the Abbey.

"There is a long tradition of welcoming all Christians, and of supporting Christian unity at the Abbey," she commented.

Teacher's protest in Abbey

The Bucks Herald, 19th October 1983, reported:

"Teacher's Protest in Abbey"

David Clarke, 34, of Aylesbury, lecturer at Luton College, was removed from St. Albans Abbey for protesting against a Catholic priest offering Mass.

He said: "This is against the Church of England Articles of Religion."

He was escorted out with his children.

Letters to the Editor

Two letters appeared in response:

1. "An Evil Wind Is Blowing" – Mrs Cecilia Brooks

She accused me of disrupting the unity between churches and promoting hate, saying I should read the Bible for lessons on love and tolerance.

2. "Playing Fantastic Tricks" – K.M.D. Dunbar

This letter compared me to fanatics, claiming I was undermining efforts by the Pope and Archbishop of Canterbury to foster peace.

My Reply – Published 27th October 1983

"Cannot Remain Silent" – David Clarke

My protest was one of love and truth. The Roman Mass is blasphemy (see Article 31 of the Church of England). Rome teaches that salvation cannot be found outside the Mass — a direct contradiction of the gospel.

I preach Christ, not superstition, and lead former criminals to the true Saviour — not the Mass.

To those offended, I ask: if this is of God, who can overthrow it?

CHAPTER 26

Waddesdon Strict Baptist Chapel

In 1984, I received a letter from Mr Rose of Luton, a former trustee of Waddesdon Hill Strict Baptist Chapel, while I was still residing in Bierton. He inquired whether our church at Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church would be interested in holding evangelistic meetings at Waddesdon Hill during the time of Mission England, when Billy Graham was preaching

across the country.

Mr Rose suggested I write to the new trustees of the chapel, who were now under the care of the Metropolitan Association of Strict Baptist Churches.

However, our church at Bierton had no interest in Billy Graham's campaigns, nor in anything associated with Mission England, due to their clear Arminian theology. Nonetheless, I felt there was value in preaching the Gospel during this national focus on evangelism and wished to use the Waddesdon chapel for that purpose.

I wrote to the trustees, explaining the situation and requesting permission for myself and a few Christian friends — including some from the church at Eaton Bray — to use the chapel for a series of Gospel meetings. I made it clear that this was at Mr Rose's encouragement, and that I was willing to organise and lead the meetings independently, as Bierton Church did not want to be officially responsible.

Waddesdon Hill Gospel Standard Chapel

Waddesdon Hill Strict Baptist Chapel (G S)

Waddesdon Hill Strict Baptist Chapel was a charming, traditional Gospel Standard chapel, tucked away on the village road in Waddesdon. It had closed due to declining attendance. Nevertheless, I had a long-standing connection with the place. Since 1976, I had attended its annual anniversary services, first under the ministry of Mr Collier (Linslade Strict Baptist Church), and later under Mr Hill (Luton Strict Baptist Church).

It was a place I cherished — quiet, reverent, and representative of our historical Baptist tradition.

My Letter to the Trustees

I sent the following letter to the chairman of the trust:

David Clarke
187 Aylesbury Road, Bierton
27 April 1984

Dear Mr Knight,

Following our telephone conversation on Tuesday, I write on behalf of a number of believers to request permission to hold public meetings for the preaching of the Word of God and worship at the chapel situated at Waddesdon Hill.

We propose initially to hold three or four meetings during the summer months — on the first Saturday of each month: June, July, August, and September, during the afternoon.

I am a Particular Baptist (and minister of the Gospel), currently in membership with Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church. While our church does not wish to take responsibility for these meetings, they raise no objection to my personal involvement and organisation.

Please find enclosed a list of supporting subscribers offering their mutual assistance.

I understand your committee will be meeting shortly, and we would be grateful for your kind consideration. If approval can be granted, may we also receive a copy of the Articles of Faith and the relevant clauses in the Trust Deed?

Yours sincerely,
David Clarke
Request Refused

Regrettably, my request was refused. The trustees explained that they were seeking a properly constituted church to take over the chapel, such as Limes Avenue Strict Baptist Church.

I found their approach disheartening. It struck me as overly rigid and institutional, lacking the flexibility and spiritual discernment often required in Gospel ministry. This experience helped shape my growing concern over the way certain church associations operated — and I could not commend them in good conscience.

Attempt to Purchase the Chapel

Later that year, having now separated from Bierton Church, a few believers and I had begun meeting in my home. At that time, I learned the Waddesdon Hill Chapel was being put up for sale.

I felt this might be a providential opportunity. Perhaps we could use the chapel to gather formally and eventually constitute a church. I wrote again to the trustees, explaining my situation and requesting a copy of the Trust Deed. Given that I had regularly attended services there in previous years, I believed we might qualify under the criteria laid out in the original trust.

The trustees invited me to attend a meeting to present my case. During the discussion, one of them stated they were looking for someone "dynamic" who could go into Waddesdon village and "make an impact." I was disturbed by this. It sounded like they were seeking a charismatic figure — someone with worldly appeal. I replied, "It sounds as though you want the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to go in."

An Offer on Unsatisfactory Terms

They eventually offered me the chapel — but only on the condition that I form a church using their 1966 Strict Baptist Confession of Faith. I declined, explaining that I could not subscribe to it. I held firmly to the older Gospel Standard Articles of Faith, though without the added articles.

My response was not accepted.

Final Offer – Rejected

Still unwilling to let the chapel pass into unsuitable hands, I made a final offer. I proposed to buy the chapel outright and pledged to pay one penny more than the highest bidder.

Even this offer was rejected.

And so, I left the matter in the hands of the Lord.

CHAPTER 27

Truth Causes a Division

Luke 2:51

This chapter addresses matters I would not usually make public. However, due to the seriousness of the doctrinal errors and practices I encountered at Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, I am fully persuaded that publishing this account serves as a necessary warning to others.

What follows is a personal and detailed record of the conflict that eventually led me to withdraw from the communion at Bierton, a decision made on grounds of conscience, prompted by the church's failure to address error, maintain truth, and uphold proper conduct.

The Sermon That Marked the Turning Point

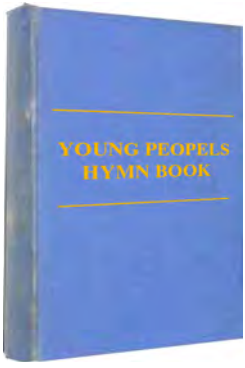
On Wednesday, 20th April 1983, I preached during our weeknight meeting at Bierton Chapel. The sermon, which was recorded and later made available online, focused on the theme of Particular Redemption — a foundational truth of the Gospel. The text I preached from was:

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8).

A sermon preached a defence of Particular Redemption 1983 (Click here)

In applying the truth of this text to our current circumstances, I raised matters relevant to our local fellowship.

The National Association of Strict Baptist Sunday



The Children's Hymn Book

I highlighted a specific problem: a blue hymn book, published by the Metropolitan Association of Strict Baptist Sunday Schools, had been

introduced into our Sunday school. It contained hymns teaching general redemption, including language suggesting Jesus died for all children indiscriminately — a view clearly contrary to our confession of faith.

I stated that it would be a good work to restore a hymn book aligned with Particular Redemption and Gospel truth. I also noted that the church lacked ruling authority and needed a pastor or elder capable of teaching and leading well.

Immediate Reactions

During the sermon, I noticed Mr King — the only other male member and a minister sent by the church — shaking his head in disapproval, especially when I labelled the idea that "Jesus died for each child" as heresy. Later, he told me he "knew not by what spirit" I had spoken.

A Call for a Church Meeting

After the service, Mrs Gurney requested a church meeting to discuss the matter. A quarterly meeting was already scheduled for 27th April 1983, and so it was agreed this would be the occasion.

At the meeting, Mr King read from Psalm 23 and, as chairman, opened the proceedings. He explained that his term as chairman would soon end and expressed his desire for someone else to take on the role, citing tensions within the fellowship.

Resistance to Discussion

When I attempted to raise the issue concerning doctrinal error in Sunday school teaching, Mr King refused to allow discussion, claiming it violated Rule 15 of the Gospel Standard Rule Book. He declared that I was "out of order" and could not proceed without church permission.

In response, I argued that since the matter involved serious doctrinal disorder, and leaving it unaddressed for a month would do harm, Rule 15 did in fact permit such action. I believed Satan was using delay as a tactic, and I felt compelled to resist — much as Cromwell had resisted tyranny, invoking no divine right to rule in unrighteousness.

Mr King Requests Honourable Dismissal

Mr King then requested an honourable dismissal from church membership. I explained that such a dismissal could only be granted if he

were joining another church of like faith and order. Otherwise, he would be avoiding a lawful inquiry into the doctrines he had promoted — which, according to our rules, was not permissible.

The Chairman's Objections

Mr King claimed I had made serious charges against the church and demanded that the chair be respected as a ruling authority. After general business concluded, I relinquished the chair to Mr King to close the meeting.

But I insisted the church must respond to the teaching of general redemption to unconverted children and parents during Sunday school meetings — teaching which contradicted Particular Redemption, our core doctrinal stance.

The Holy Table Controversy

Soon after this, the matter of the so-called "Holy Table" resurfaced. I had written to Mrs Evered, urging her to reconsider her views, as I believed the church was slipping into a form of idolatry. To my dismay, she returned my letter unopened, stating she already knew the truth and would not be swayed — claiming superior knowledge due to her upbringing.

This incident is detailed further in my publication, The Bierton Crisis (1984) Now republished, Let Christian Men Be Men.

A Moving Sermon — and a Departure

On 26th October 1983, I led the Wednesday evening prayer meeting and delivered what became a "moving sermon" — in that several members physically moved out of the room.

I reminded the congregation of how the Lord had saved me from a life of crime and drug use, and how I had come to Bierton because of their profession of Gospel truth — the doctrines of grace, sovereign election, and the righteousness of Christ.

I also challenged the false reverence given to the building itself, stating it was not the house of God, nor were there such things as holy tables in the New Testament.

At that point, one member stood and shouted, "Is not this the house of God?" pointing to the roof. Another said, "This is just like a church meeting,"

and walked out. Then Mr King, his wife, and Mr John Snuggs followed.

From that moment, Mr King ceased attending our meetings. The prophecy of a dream I had previously had now seemed fulfilled.

Outside Help and Unresolved Issues

I had earlier approached Mr Collier about Mr King's promotion of general redemption, suggesting he help resolve the issue. But Mr King refused his involvement, and nothing came of it.

Mr Collier later told me we must replace the children's hymn book — confirming my concerns.

The Death of Mr Collier

The death of Mr Collier in 1982 was a sad loss for Bierton. His funeral was well attended, and it was led by his grandson Paul Watts and Dr Ian Paisley of the Free Presbyterian Church. Mr Collier had been a valued friend and support.

Help from Mr Crane

During this difficult period, Mr Crane of Lakenheath was appointed to help us. He did his best and was very gracious, but the issues remained unresolved during my time as a member. Other difficulties began to surface.

The Gospel Standard Article 26

During my early preaching ministry, I met Stephen Royce at Eaton Bray Chapel. He and his wife were attending Bethel Strict Baptist Chapel, but he struggled to subscribe to the Added Articles of the Gospel Standard, particularly Article 26.

Because I was a sent minister from a Gospel Standard Church, he asked me to help. I understood his dilemma well, having faced similar concerns when Bierton adopted the Gospel Standard. I responded to him thoughtfully — my reply is included in The Bierton Crisis.

Stephen's concern was sincere. He longed to be baptised but was denied unless he fully accepted the added articles. His simple, scriptural plea was: "What doth hinder me to be baptised?" The answer given was that he could not subscribe in good conscience. In the end, he was baptised by another minister without joining the church.

Paul Rowland and Psalm Singing

Another visiting minister, Paul Rowland, objected to the use of hymns and preferred exclusive psalm singing. I accommodated this by allowing him to bring psalm books, and we sang from them instead of our usual Denham's Collection.

Paul also questioned the Gospel Standard Added Articles and leaned toward a Presbyterian system of church government, which I had encountered during visits to the Isle of Skye. Though I respected his convictions, I did not share all his views.

Linslade and More Children's Hymns

After Mr Collier's passing, we occasionally joined the Linslade Church for afternoon services. However, I soon noticed that even they were using children's hymns teaching general redemption — just like Bierton.

I began to wonder: Was this doctrinal compromise present in other Strict Baptist churches as well? Was Bierton just the tip of the iceberg?

Meeting Richard Bolt

Around this time, I reconnected with Dr John Verna, a Christian doctor from Stoke Mandeville Hospital, whom I had first met shortly after my conversion. He had been involved in hospital outreach with Christians from the Assemblies of God.

Dr Verna introduced me to his friend Richard Bolt, from Kent, whom he considered to have an apostolic ministry. Richard and John came to my home, encouraged me in the Lord, and urged me to continue seeking God's guidance.

Richard was a sincere, direct, and spiritually minded man — someone I respected for his conviction and honesty. I discussed with them my struggles, both in Pentecostal and Strict Baptist circles.

Both groups, I believed, had gone to extremes: Pentecostals emphasised supernatural experiences, while many Strict Baptists equated assurance of salvation with deep inward doubt — believing uncertainty to be a sign of grace.

Richard and John believed in the fullness of New Testament Christianity

— including the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit and the baptism with the Holy Ghost. I listened with interest, though cautiously.

One detail stood out: Richard had lost many of his teeth. I wondered if this was connected to his belief in divine healing — but I never asked. I didn't know him well enough for such a personal question.

CHAPTER 28
John Metcalfe and Tyler's Green Chapel

While speaking with Dr John Verna, he informed me that he and his wife had been attending the ministry of John Metcalfe, a preacher from Penn, near High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. He mentioned that members of this fellowship occasionally had a literature stall in Aylesbury Market Square, where they distributed Christian materials, exclusively using the Authorised King James Version of the Bible.

My interest was piqued because I had recently come across a tract by John Metcalfe titled The Gospel of God, which dealt with the claims of the Papacy and Pope John Paul II. I found the content thoughtful and in alignment with my own views, especially concerning Roman Catholic errors. I also recalled a previous visitor to our Bierton Church named James, who had attended Mr Metcalfe's ministry. Encouraged by the tract, I decided to seek out Mr Metcalfe personally.

Shortly after Dr Verna and Richard Bolt visited me, I resolved to visit Tyler's Green Chapel (Bethlehem Meeting Hall) in Penn one Sunday evening, taking my young daughter Esther, then about three or four years old. When we arrived, we found the chapel gates locked. A service was clearly ongoing inside, but there was no way to access the front door. I wondered at the time whether this was a symbolic gesture—reminding me of the parable of the five foolish virgins who were shut out (Matthew 25:2).

Undeterred, Esther and I waited outside until the service ended. Eventually, the congregation filed out in silence. I approached a man I believed to be John Metcalfe: a well-dressed gentleman with white or grey hair and a cream-coloured coat. He was polite, and I explained our visit and inquired about the locked gate. Smiling, he explained it was to prevent vandalism, as the chapel had experienced trouble before.

He noted our persistence and, upon learning that I had read his tract, seemed encouraged. He invited us back to his home for supper. His daughters graciously entertained Esther with chocolate biscuits, while Mr Metcalfe and I discussed theology and our respective testimonies. I shared the full account of my conversion, and he asked about my position at Bierton, the doctrinal issues I was facing, and my role as a lecturer and minister.

I admired the man. He struck me as principled, serious, and deeply committed to following God. His home was beautiful—set in a lovely garden, elegant, and well kept. He had strong views and was unafraid to oppose leading evangelical figures such as Ian Paisley and Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones. I sensed I could learn much from him.

Later, I returned with my wife and we were invited to a Sunday morning meeting at Tyler's Green Chapel. The children were looked after by church members while we attended. Mr Metcalfe delivered a powerful sermon—eloquent, stirring, and rich in Scripture. I recognised much of it from his publication titled Messiah. I was greatly moved and desired to support his work.

After the meeting, Mr Metcalfe asked for feedback. I was hesitant; I had grown cautious about flattery and was unsure how to express my admiration without being misunderstood. I remained silent, though inwardly stirred.

Visit with Paul Rowland

Soon afterwards, Paul Rowland, a Strict Baptist minister and employee of the Trinitarian Bible Society, preached at Bierton. Paul held to Presbyterian convictions and believed only Psalms should be sung in worship. I mentioned Mr Metcalfe, and Paul expressed interest in meeting him. We were both invited to his home in Penn.

The visit was memorable. Upon arrival, our coats were taken, and we were ushered into a grand lounge-library. Mr Metcalfe wore a smart suit and engaged us in deep conversation. Topics included the Psalms, his latest publications, and the doctrine of Justification.

Mr Metcalfe opposed the Presbyterian view of Justification, specifically the idea that Christ's obedience to the Law of Moses constituted the believer's righteousness. He insisted that the New Testament never refers to the "righteousness of Christ," but rather the "righteousness of God," which

he distinguished as being apart from the Law.

The discussion became theological and intense. At one point, he posed a riddle: Was the fruit Adam ate good or bad? This was followed by a dramatic moment—he pulled out a shotgun from behind a curtain and unloaded it before us. He explained that the IRA had threatened him, and he had to be cautious. He also mentioned our pockets had been searched and found tobacco, which he later used to make a derogatory comment.

Despite the dramatic episode, the conversation led me to deeply reflect on the doctrine of Justification, particularly the distinctions between eternal justification, justification by faith, and justification by blood.

Theological Clarifications

In response to the conversation, I reflected on several truths:

- Justification from eternity: In the mind of God, the elect were justified before the world began. Yet this justification was grounded in the righteousness to be wrought by Christ in time.

- Christ's righteousness: He was righteous by virtue of His person, not by obedience to the Law of Moses. The Law was never given to Gentiles as a rule of eternal life but rather promised earthly blessings.

- Justification by faith: Experienced in the conscience when a sinner believes, as with Abraham. It brings the joy of salvation.

- Justification by blood: Accomplished through Christ's vicarious death and applied by His blood, cleansing the sinner.

Conflict and Fallout

A few days later, Mr Metcalfe called me. I mistakenly addressed him as "John," not realising who it was. He immediately rebuked me for my informality and insisted on being addressed as Mr Metcalfe. He asked for my feedback on the meeting, but I felt pressured and uneasy. When I suggested his tract contained a theological error, he responded arrogantly, saying he had more theology in his little finger than I would ever know. He dismissed my testimony as "disgusting" and compared me to the Pharisees who blasphemed the Holy Spirit.

Shaken, I later wrote two letters to him while studying at Durham University. In these, I apologised for any offence caused but defended my conscience and theological concerns, especially his use of the phrase "merits of Christ's person" and the concept of imparting Christ's person.

I argued that Christ's merits and righteousness should be ascribed to His work and nature, not abstractly to His person. I found the expression "merits of Christ's person" to be problematic and explained why I believed it needed clarification.

Mr Metcalfe returned both letters without comment. I took this as a clear rejection of my concerns.

Thus ended my attempt to fellowship and reason with Mr Metcalfe. Although I admired his clarity and strength, his treatment of me—and his theological imprecision—left me with caution. I had been helped, but also humbled, and I learned to weigh all things carefully by the Word of God.

CHAPTER 29

I Leave the Bierton Church

The events that unfolded in our Bierton Church convinced me that Satan's kingdom was being plundered. I had, by the grace of God, stirred no small commotion in the fellowship. By October 1983, the church was practically dysfunctional.

I had been scheduled to preach and administer the communion service. However, I felt unable to carry out this duty, as my conscience bore witness that it would be wrong. The Lord's Supper represents our shared fellowship in Christ, but our congregation had become severely divided. Until the issues were resolved and the church restored to order and unity in the Lord, I could not, in good conscience, conduct the service.

Mrs Evered, who had earlier objected to the term "evangelical repentance," pointed her finger at me as the source of the disruption. That incident was another significant matter, which I address in full in The Bierton Crisis. It was claimed that I had caused the division beginning in April 1983, after I wrote to Mr King, a church member and sent preacher, objecting to his teachings on general redemption.

Our Articles of Faith clearly stated a belief in Particular Redemption,

and both Mr King and Mrs Evered had previously proposed and seconded our association with the Gospel Standard—which affirms this doctrine. They could not claim ignorance.

I first approached Mr King in private, attempting to correct his views. When this failed, I wrote to him and to Mrs Evered to clarify what I could not accept. Mr King described my letter as "full of condemnation" and read parts of it to the church before resigning. Mrs Evered returned my letter unread.

Other issues also emerged, including the insistence that visiting women wear hats (head coverings), and the matter of the so-called "Holy Table." I did not oppose women wearing head coverings in accordance with Scripture, but I could not accept the legalistic enforcement of such traditions on unbelieving visitors. These issues, promoted by Mrs Evered—who insisted she had known the truth from childhood—revealed a troubling spirit of religious pride and error.

At times, I felt the presence of the enemy himself in our meetings. I believed I was engaged in spiritual warfare—not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of darkness. I was determined to stand for the truth of the Gospel and to oppose the religious spirits that kept believers in bondage.

Eventually, I began to wonder whether I was the one causing trouble and should simply walk away. But on reflection, I now believe this thought was a satanic temptation. I had been contending earnestly for the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I Secede from the Bierton Church

From the church meeting on 27th April 1983 until 26th June 1984, I continued to contend for Gospel truth with our church members, particularly Mr King and Mrs Evered, over these serious doctrinal and practical errors.

Eventually, I could see no way forward. I could not remain in fellowship with those who resisted the light. To continue in such a situation would have been contrary to faith and conscience. Thus, on 26th June 1984, I formally seceded from the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church.

According to our rules, the church could have dismissed me and my wife

dishonourably for failing to partake of communion, but on the advice of our overseer, Mr Paul Crane, they refrained from doing so. Neither I, my wife, nor Mr King were formally excommunicated.

Informing the Trustees

I believed it was my duty to inform our Trustees of all that had transpired. This entire account, including correspondence and detailed explanations,was recorded in my publication *The Bierton Crisis*, privately published in 1984 and circulater to all the churches and misters involved, and later reissued as *Let Christian Men Be Men*. See Further Publications at the end of this book.

CHAPTER 30
The End of an Age

Immediately after my secession from the Bierton Church—following the troubles recounted in *Chapter 35, I Go Fishing for Men, in Converted on LSD Trip (Part 2)*—my circumstances, alas, went from bad to worse. The year was 1984, and I was persuaded, in the fear of the Lord, that to part company with the church was both right and necessary. From that moment onwards, however, I descended into a time of sore trial and affliction.

My gaze was fixed heavenward, yearning for that city "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10), but the path I was called to tread became steeped in darkness and tribulation. I could well relate to Naomi in the book of Ruth, who lamented: "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" (Ruth 1:20–21). So it was that I felt the hand of the Lord had gone out against me.

Let Christian Men Be Men

Upon leaving the Bierton Church, I was moved to write an account and give a reason for my secession in The Bierton Crisis, now republished under the title Let Christian Men Be Men.

My wife and I sought the Lord's leading, being persuaded by Scripture that believers ought to be joined to a Gospel church. We removed to Shropshire, hoping to unite with the church at Lord's Hill under the ministry of Mr Peter

Hallihan, of whom I had heard favourable reports.

At the time, I remained employed as a lecturer at Luton College of Higher Education, residing in lodgings during the week and returning to Shropshire at weekends. Yet all my labours in that county were in vain, and a heavy cloud of depression descended upon me.

I entered a dreadful, dark valley—akin to the shadow of death. My hope and confidence in the Lord were sorely tried. I could not help but wonder: were these afflictions the consequence of the stand I had taken at Bierton—my protest against the denial of Particular Redemption and the clinging to unscriptural superstitions and traditions?

I leave the reader with this question: Can any good come out of such deep turmoil and grief?

What Happened Next

In my next volume—a continuation of Converted on LSD Trip, under the title The Fall, Desperation, and Recovery—I set forth a series of alarming events, some of which fill me with shame. Yet I do so to declare that, in the fullness of time, the Lord turned these evils into good.

Alas, I turned aside from the living God in unbelief, falling into open sin. My path led through divorce, remarriage, and—blessed be His name—a return to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This led me to write about the errors I encountered in a Christian church when I sought to return to the Christian way of life. Six elders at the Warsash Jesus Is Lord Church intended to appoint women as elders. As a result of my objection, I was virtually asked to leave. This account may be read in Mary, Mary Quite Contrary, published in the year 2000 and now republished under the title Eldership Is Male, or alternatively, Only a Woman Can Be Pregnant.

Prior to that, in 1993, I received word of my brother Michael's arrest and imprisonment in the Philippines. To my amazement, I later learned that he too had been converted—from crime to Christ—partway through his sixteen-year sentence.

This continuation—The Fall, Desperation, and Recovery—chronicles not only my own journey but also the Gospel labours which began in the jails of the Philippines, where my brother Michael was incarcerated until his

death in New Bilibid Prison, in May 2005. This work began in 2001 and is recorded in our joint book, *Trojan Warriors: Setting Captives free.*

That work lives on today under the care of Pastor William Ola Poloc, Bishop of Christ-Centred Church Phils. Inc., and is further documented in his book *Called From Darkness Into His Marvellous Light*.

The Fall, Desperation, and Recovery—the second part of *Converted on LSD Trip*—tells the whole story.

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

All or these publications are available as hard copies books from Amazon.co.uk. And have been reprinted by Bierton Particular Baptists. Or PDF copies available on request nbpttc@yahoo.co.uk

Amazon.com, Amazon.co.uk, Amazon.de
Amazon.fr,Amazon.es, Amazon.it, Amazon.co.jp
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These books are all available from our website

LET CHRISTIAN MEN BE MEN

David Clarke

Originally published as *The Bierton Crisis* (1984), this deeply personal and theological account traces the journey of David Clarke—minister, church secretary, and committed member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, a historic Gospel Standard cause founded in 1832.

This book documents a significant crisis that shook the foundation of the Bierton Church in 1984. As doctrinal errors and questionable practices crept into the fellowship, David stood firm in proclaiming the doctrines of grace—particularly Particular Redemption—and affirmed that the gospel of Christ, not the Law of Moses, is the believer's rule of life. His stance led to a withdrawal of fellowship, yet the church never terminated his membership,

desiring his return.

David's testimony not only exposes the theological and ecclesiastical struggles within the church but also chronicles the unexpected closure of the Bierton chapel in 2002, while he was engaged in gospel mission work in the Philippines. Upon returning to the UK, he discovered that a new, unelected group of trustees had taken control of the chapel, denied his rightful membership, and ultimately sold the historic building as a domestic property in 2006.

This book is both a warning and a call: a warning against doctrinal compromise and a call for ministers and believers to ground their faith and practice in Scripture alone—not tradition, not personal opinion, and not the fear of man.

Let Christian Men Be Men is an appeal to return to biblical conviction, gospel clarity, and godly courage—so that men may truly stand, teach, and live as Christ's ambassadors in an age of confusion.

CONVERTED ON LSD TRIP

The Bucks Herald

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CONVERTED ON LSD TRIP

David Clarke who had a three-year career of undetected crime, experienced a "Christian conversion" whilst suffering from the effects of LSD, he told Aylesbury magistrates, on Tuesday. After wrestling with his conscience for a year, he confessed to 24 crimes, and gave information leading to the recovery of over £1000 worth of stolen property. In court he pleaded guilty to charges of stealing a £600 colour television set from an old peoples home, a £20 sport gun, and a hydraulic jack. He asked for 21 other charges to be taken into consideration, including stealing a builders chest, two cars, and an electric arc welder, two other TV sets, two compressors, and a road trailer. Clarke (21) of Finmere Crescent said that his reputation in the town had been that of a man who was enjoying himself. "I used to sell drugs to young people, and indulge in permissive sex" he declared.

Seeking Truth

"Religion to me was rubbish, and for sissy people who could not stand on their own feet", he said.

David Could these boys do any real wrong ? Michael

"Within my heart I was searching for truth, and a meaning to life". He had good prospects of getting on in life he went on but "I was not satisfied with what I had, I was greedy, selfish and boastful." Clarke had been using pep pills, and marijuana since he was 16 he told the court, but it was after taking LSD that he experienced, what he described as, "a major thing in my life". He described the "torment" he suffered, as a result of taking the drug, and went on "I warn any young person who hears my testimony, "The effects of LSD are so bad, and I warn you to stay clear".

While in this condition he said he, "Called on the name of Jesus" and his torment went from him.

Voice Of Christ

"Jesus Christ spoke to me as clearly as I speak here today saying, "David, I am with you", he said. "What you have been going through is nothing compared to what hell is like".

Mr Murray, of Manor Crescent Wendover said he was fabulously sceptical of sudden conversions, and promised to put them to the test of time. The time, which had elapsed, since Clarke's profession of faith had convinced him that this young man would now be salt and light to society. "He is in truth, a new man, and had experienced what Christ called a second birth". Murray said. Clarke, now put himself out to be of assistance, read the bible intensely, always carried a New Testament, attended a wide circle of churches and would spend hours in discussion on spiritual things.

Difficulty

Clarke's difficulty during the months spent deciding how to make amends for his past had been the problem of accusing himself, without informing on others.

Continued Inside

By David Clarke (Author)
3rd Edition Paperback – 3 Jun. 2020

This third edition of Converted on LSD Trip bears powerful witness to the life-transforming grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed through the

remarkable true accounts of David Clarke and his brother, Michael Clarke.

David's dramatic conversion occurred on the night of 16th January 1970, during a harrowing LSD experience. In the depths of terror and despair, he cried out unto God—and from that moment onward, his life was utterly changed. Nearly three decades later, his brother Michael likewise came to a saving knowledge of Christ whilst serving a prison sentence in the Philippines. Each went on to devote his life to the preaching of the gospel and to ministering unto others.

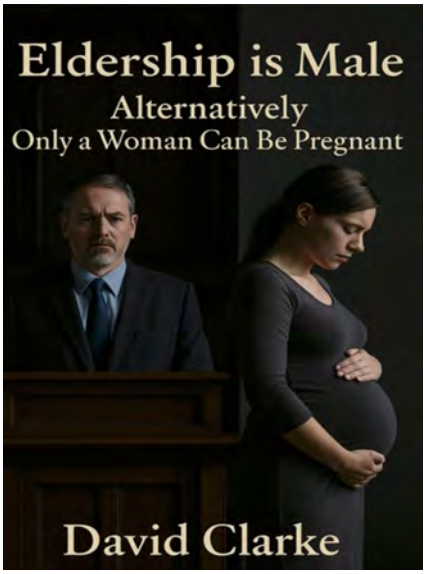
This latest edition serves not only as a deeply personal testimony but also as a compelling evangelistic tool—intended to encourage fellow believers to proclaim the gospel of Christ with boldness, clarity, and conviction. It also draws attention to the continuing work of Christian ministry in Baguio City, Philippines, under the faithful leadership of William O. Poloc, a former inmate of New Bilibid Prison, who now labours in the gospel, reaching others with the glad tidings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The author rightly underscores the pressing need to teach the traditional Christian doctrines of grace in this present age—doctrines which uphold the sovereignty of God in salvation, the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the divine authority and infallibility of Holy Scripture. The book stands unflinchingly against the prevailing errors of modern ungodliness, including unbelief, moral relativism, homosexuality, radical feminism, and the propagation of false religions such as Islam.

Converted on LSD Trip is both a moving testimony and a rousing call to action. It exhorts the reader to stand firm in the faith and to contend earnestly for the truth of the gospel in a world that is perishing for lack of it.

ELDERSHIP IS MALE

alternatively ONLY A WOMAN CAN BE PREGNANT



David Clarke

This book originally published under the title, Mary, Mary Quite Contrary, Alternatively, 'Does The Lord Jesus Want A Woman To Rules as An Elder in His Church? It relates to the government of a Christian Church.

It contains an historic account of the authors experience when seeking to address the errors of certain elders, who in the interest of equality and kindness, sought to appoint women elders in their Church, so turning from the clear teaching of the bible[1].

This author, David Clarke believes that this trend of modern men, in turning away from Conservative Christian beliefs, regarding the roles of men and women, including marriage, male and female distinctions, has lead to our Woke society. David believes this deviation from the norm has opened up many related issues such as sexual identity, the use of personal pronouns, gender reassignment treatment, gender-affirming hormone therapy and other issues effecting our society.

This book has been republished with a new title, 'Eldership is Male', alternatively, 'Only a Woman can be pregnant', brought about by Suella Braverman, MP, for Fareham, and former Attorney General and Home Secretary, expressing her belief that Only a Woman Can be Pregnant, where there seemed to be some uncertainty, in the mind of the Labour shadow leader, Keir Starmer as to what a woman was. The term eldership by the way meaning those in government of a Christian Church.

1 1 Timothy 2:12,1 Corinthians 14:34

The author states that the bible teaches only a male can be appointed as an elder, as this is clearly taught in the New Testament and not a women. It is not a statement prescribing the rules relating to men and women in a secular society but only that between men and women in a Christian Church where it is the responsibility for Christians to reflect their relationship between them selves to that between Christ and His Church, where Christ is (He) the head of the Church and the Church (she) is to be subject to Him.

Suella Braverman's humorous retort, Only a Woman Can Be Pregnant, caught the imagination of the author, prompting him to change the title of his book to Eldership Is Male, Alternatively Only A Woman Can Be Pregnant as she too identified problems in Conservative government, where harmful politically correct speech prevented good government, which she says led to the downfall of the Conservative party at the landslide election of the Labour Government, in the UK on 27th July 2024. She said, 'When I was attorney general I was having my second child and I was pregnant and I went to tell Boris Johnson and informed him saying I'm going to be having a baby. He was very supportive and he said this is fantastic news, and they would do whatever was need to allow me to have some maternity leave. What we needed to do is draft a new law. We drafted the law, the responsibility was given to the Minister for the cabinet office, Penny Mordaunt. However this got into a debate internally and it also played out in the Commons, and in the Lords in Parliament about the wording to be used in this legislation.

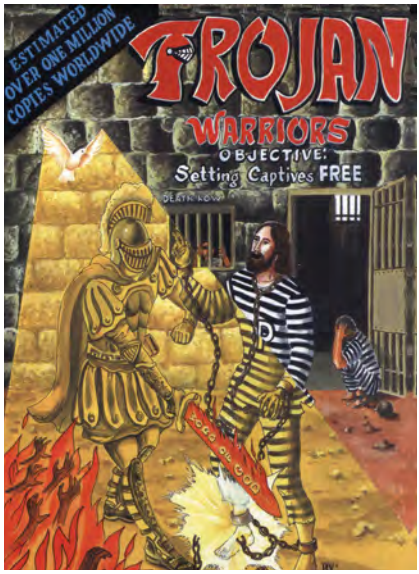
I believe that only a woman can be pregnant but the minister, and the other ministers said we needed to use the terminology pregnant person, in the legislation, to allow me to have some maternity leave. So that we could be inclusive, so that we could be kind, so that we could be Progressive. That was the kind of debate that was happening about a seemingly non-controversial matter in government, not with civil servants but with fellow ministers in my own party.

So that I hope that illustrates the kind of problem that we're dealing with in our own party. As time has progressed the doctrine in Whitehall relating to diversity, inclusion and Equality, all of which serves to promote harmful, politically correct speech, and until we get to grips with the extent of the problem we have no chance of fixing it, and importantly we have no chance of regaining the trust of millions of a conservative vote.

It is my desire, as the author of this book, that it will be the means of re-education and the restoration of correct views, and practices, relating to the appointment or elders in a Christian Church.

David Clarke 22 September 2024

TROJAN WARRIORS



Setting Captives Free
Authored by Mr David Clarke CertEd, Authored by Mr Michael J Clark

Trojan Warriors: Setting Captives Free is the true and extraordinary account of two brothers—Michael and David Clarke—raised in Aylesbury, England, who turned from a life of crime to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the 1960s, both brothers were convicted and imprisoned for malicious wounding and carrying firearms without a license. David, the younger, experienced a radical conversion in 1970 after a terrifying LSD trip. He went on to teach himself to read using the Bible, pursued higher education, became a lecturer, and later served as a Baptist minister.

Michael, however, continued a flamboyant and criminal lifestyle, eventually landing in a Philippine prison in 1996, sentenced to 16 years. It was there—after five years in maximum security—that he too came to faith in Christ.

Moved by his brother's transformation, David launched a mission to the Philippines, determined to help and support Michael. Together, they began working with inmates in New Bilibid Prison—many of whom were former gang leaders, murderers, and drug traffickers—who had also experienced profound conversions.

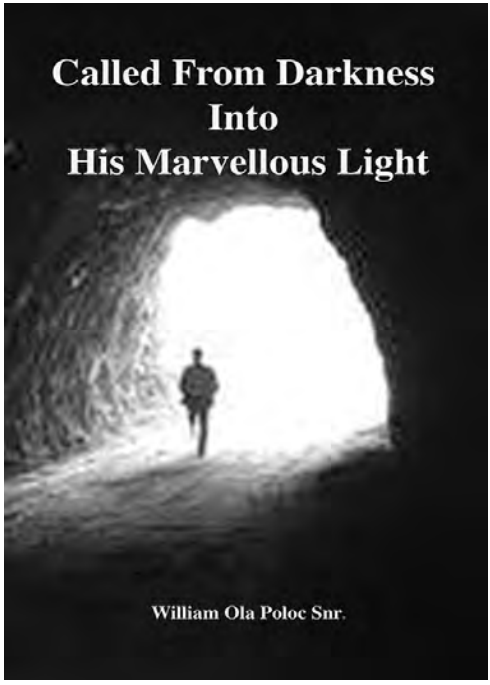
This book tells the story of that mission and includes 66 handwritten testimonies from inmates whose lives were changed by the gospel. Among

them were **22 men on Death Row,** awaiting execution by lethal injection—yet now living in hope, bold in faith, and committed to spreading the message of Christ.

These are the Trojan Warriors—once captives to sin, now soldiers of Christ.

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." — Revelation 12:11

CALLED FROM DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT



William Poloc

William Poloc was once an inmate of New Bilibid Prison in the Philippines, having been sentenced to 14 years for the crime of homicide. Yet it was during his time in prison that the Lord Jesus Christ called him to repentance and faith. Turning his back on a life of sin, William began to read the Holy Scriptures and study theology. In time, he came to understand and embrace the doctrines of grace, and he was soon teaching the gospel to his fellow inmates.

I first met William in October 2001 while visiting New Bilibid Prison, where I was serving as Director of the Christian mission, Trojan Horse

International.

Upon his release in August 2002, William was commissioned by Trojan Horse International and sent back to his home city of Baguio to preach the gospel to the inmates of Baguio City Jail and Benguet Provincial Jail.

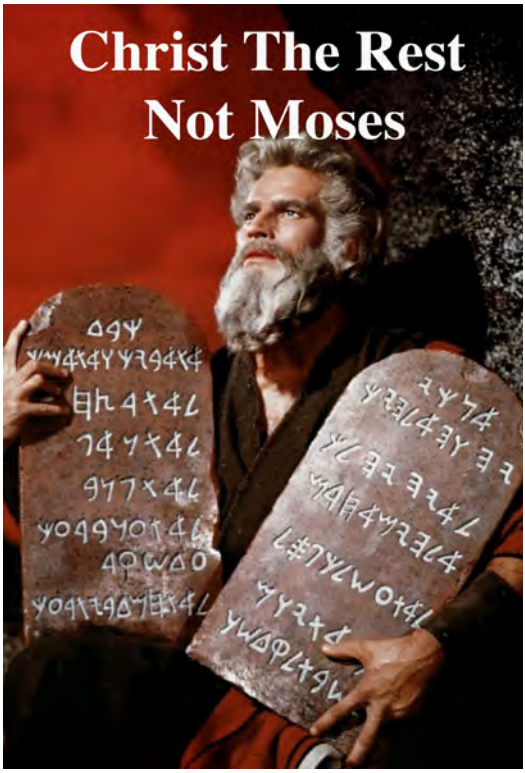
In October 2002, I travelled to Baguio City Jail in my capacity as Mission Director and as a sent minister of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists. There, I had the privilege of baptising 22 inmates who had been truly converted—from crime to Christ—through the ministry of William Poloc. I also baptised a further 8 souls at Benguet Provincial Jail who likewise testified of salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. These remarkable events coincided with the final worship service ever held at the Bierton Strict Baptist Chapel in the United Kingdom, which took place on 22nd December 2002.

Over the past two decades, Brother William has faithfully laboured in the gospel ministry. As his testimony shows, he has continued to preach and teach the Word of God, and has established what is now known as the Baguio Christ-Centred Churches.

We give thanks to Almighty God for His wondrous works in the salvation of sinners, and for raising up faithful men like William Poloc, who proclaim the message that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15, KJV).

David Clarke
Director, Trojan Horse International
April 20

CHRIST THE REST, NOT MOSES



By David Clarke

"Let us labour therefore… to enter into that rest." – Hebrews 4:11

What is the true rest promised to the people of God? Is it found in observing days and laws — or in Christ Himself?

In this bold and thought-provoking work, David Clarke draws from Scripture and personal experience to confront a foundational issue at the heart of Christian doctrine: justification by faith alone.

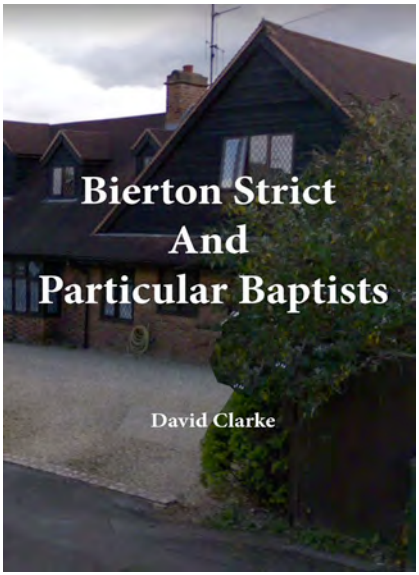
Clarke, once rejected by a Gospel Standard minister over his understanding of Hebrews 4, writes not to stir controversy, but to call believers back to the simplicity and power of the gospel. With a serious tone, pastoral heart, and unwavering conviction, he urges readers to turn from legalism and shadows to the finished work of Christ.

Written especially for those who love the doctrines of grace, yet

feel isolated or misunderstood, this book is a call to clarity, courage, and confidence in the rest that is found in Christ — and Christ alone.

This is not merely a theological issue. It is a matter of liberty, peace, and the very ground of our standing before God.

BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS



My Testimony and Confession

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert. Ed

This book, originally published under the title Converted on LSD Trip, is the gripping true-life account of David Clarke, told in autobiographical form. But it is no ordinary story. It traces the astonishing journey of two brothers—David and Michael Clarke—who, during the 1960s, were well-known criminals in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, and active participants in the Mod subculture. In 1967, both were sentenced to prison—David for malicious wounding and the unlawful possession of a firearm.

The turning point in their lives came at different times. David experienced a dramatic and life-changing conversion in 1970 after a terrifying LSD trip brought him to the brink of despair. In that moment of fear, he cried out unto God—and the Lord heard him. From that night forward, he turned from a life of crime and embarked on a new path of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Though he had left school barely able to read, he taught himself using

the Bible and classic Christian writings to gain a deeper understanding of the gospel. His transformation was so complete that he later confessed to 24 additional crimes, committed after his release from Dover Borstal in 1968. Remarkably, when these were brought before the courts, he was shown mercy and not sentenced.

David went on to become a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, a Gospel Standard cause, and was later called and sent out by the church to preach the gospel. Along the way, he encountered numerous doctrinal errors within various denominations, and he faced significant opposition in his efforts to uphold biblical truth. These challenges were recorded in his earlier work The Bierton Crisis (1984), now republished under the title Let Christian Men Be Men, intended to help others facing similar trials of faith.

Meanwhile, Michael remained untouched by David's conversion. He continued to live flamboyantly and lawlessly, a path that led him to a 16-year prison sentence in the Philippines in 1996. Sadly, he died in prison in 2005 from tuberculosis.

In 1995, David became aware of Michael's arrest via an ITN television news broadcast. This prompted him to begin writing the story of their lives, which was first published as Converted on LSD Trip. In 1999, he received word that Michael—after five years in prison—had also experienced a profound conversion. His heart was moved after reading Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis. Convinced that Jesus was indeed "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16, KJV), Michael too turned from crime to Christ.

In 2001, David journeyed to the Philippines to support his brother and engage in gospel outreach among inmates. Together, they laboured to bring the message of redemption to those within New Bilibid Prison and other institutions across the country. Their shared ministry is chronicled in the book Trojan Warriors, which contains 66 stirring testimonies of men whose lives were transformed by the grace of God—22 of whom were on Death Row.

This book stands as a powerful testimony to the sovereign grace of God, the wonder of redemption, and the transforming power of the gospel. David Clarke's journey is a light of hope for all who seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, and a reminder that, no matter one's past, true freedom is found in Him.